

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region 4

In the Matter of:

**Bella Vista of Rome, LLC,**

Respondent.

Docket No. **CAA-04-2020-0004(b)**

**CONSENT AGREEMENT**

**I. NATURE OF ACTION**

1. This is an administrative penalty assessment proceeding brought under Section 113(d) of the Clean Air Act (“CAA” or the “Act”), 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d), and Sections 22.13(b) and 22.18 of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits (Consolidated Rules), as codified at Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), Part 22.
2. This Consent Agreement and the attached Final Order shall collectively be referred to as the CAFO.
3. Having found that settlement is consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act and applicable regulations, the Parties have agreed to settle this action pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.18 and consent to the entry of this CAFO without adjudication of any issues of law or fact herein.

**II. PARTIES**

4. Complainant is the Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division, who has been delegated the authority on behalf of the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to enter into this CAFO pursuant to 40 C.F.R. Part 22 and Section 113(d) of the Act.
5. Respondent is Bella Vista of Rome, LLC, a limited-liability corporation doing business in the State of Georgia. This proceeding pertains to renovation activity conducted by the Respondent as the owner of a six-unit apartment building located at 202 East Fourth Avenue in Rome, Georgia 30161 (Facility).

### III. GOVERNING LAW

6. Any person who violates Section 112 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412, or rule promulgated thereunder, may be assessed a civil penalty pursuant to Section 113(d) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d), and 40 C.F.R. Part 19. Each day a violation continues may constitute a separate violation. Civil penalties under Section 113(d) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d), may be assessed by an administrative order.
7. Pursuant to Sections 112(l) of the CAA, the EPA delegated the Administrator's authorities and responsibilities to implement and enforce emission standards and prevention requirements for asbestos under Section 112 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412, to the State of Georgia. The State has adopted rules for asbestos that are at least as or more stringent than EPA's asbestos regulations located at 40 C.F.R. Part 61, Subpart M, promulgated pursuant to Section 112 of the CAA. As indicated in Section 112(l)(7) of the CAA, nothing in Section 112(l) of the CAA shall prohibit the Administrator from enforcing any applicable standard or requirement under Section 112 of the CAA.
8. Asbestos is a "hazardous air pollutant" as that term is defined in Section 112(a) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(a), and is the subject of regulations codified at 40 C.F.R. Part 61, Subpart M, "National Emission Standard for Asbestos," promulgated pursuant to Section 112 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412.
9. A "person" is defined in Section 302 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7602, as an individual, corporation, partnership, association, state, municipality, political subdivision of a state and any agency, department or instrumentality of the United States and any officer, agent or employee thereof.
10. A "facility" is defined in 40 C.F.R. § 61.141, in part, as any institutional, commercial, public, industrial or residential structure, installation or building (including any structure, installation or building containing condominiums or individual dwelling units operated as a residential cooperative, but excluding residential buildings having four or fewer dwelling units); any ship, and any active or inactive waste disposal site.
11. "Demolition" is defined in 40 C.F.R. § 61.141 as the wrecking or taking out of any load-supporting structural member of a facility together with any related handling operations or the intentional burning of any facility.
12. "Renovation" is defined in 40 C.F.R. § 61.141 as altering a facility or one or more facility components in any way, including the stripping or removal of regulated asbestos-containing material from a facility component.
13. An "owner or operator of a demolition or renovation activity" is defined in 40 C.F.R. § 61.141 as any person who owns, leases, operates, controls or supervises the facility being demolished or renovated or any person who owns, leases, operates, controls or supervises the demolition or renovation operation or both.

14. Since the EPA has delegated the Administrator's authorities and responsibilities for asbestos under Section 112 of the CAA to the State of Georgia, owners or operators of demolition or renovation activity occurring in the State must notify the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (Georgia EPD), Lead-Based Paint and Asbestos Program of any such activity pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 61.145(b).
15. EPA and the United States Department of Justice jointly determined that this matter, although it involves alleged violations that occurred more than one year before the initiation of this proceeding, is appropriate for an administrative penalty assessment. 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d).

#### **IV. FINDINGS OF FACT**

16. Respondent is a limited-liability corporation doing business in the State of Georgia and meets the definition of a "person" as defined in Section 302(e) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7602(e).
17. Respondent began renovations in 2018 following water damage to the Facility. Renovation activity was completed on or around June 12, 2019 at the Facility.
18. At the time of the renovation activity, the building referenced in paragraph 17 met the definition of a "Facility."
19. The Respondent is the owner responsible for the renovation activity at the Facility. Therefore, Respondent meets the definition of an "owner or operator of a renovation or demolition activity."
20. Based on an investigation which included, but was not limited to, an office visit of Bella Vista of Rome, LLC conducted by the EPA on September 12, 2019, and subsequent correspondence and discussions with the Respondent, the EPA determined the Respondent did not thoroughly inspect the Facility or portion of the Facility affected for asbestos-containing materials prior to beginning the renovation activity, as required by the regulations pertaining to asbestos found at 40 C.F.R. Part 61, Subpart M, and as described more particularly in Section V below.

#### **V. ALLEGED VIOLATIONS**

21. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 61.145(a), each owner or operator of a renovation or demolition activity is required to thoroughly inspect the Facility or portion of the Facility affected for asbestos-containing materials prior to beginning the demolition or renovation activity.
22. Based on the factual allegations set forth above in the "Findings of Facts" of this CAFO, the EPA alleges that Respondent violated Section 112 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. §7412 and 40 C.F.R. §61.145(a) by failing to conduct a thorough asbestos inspection of the Facility prior to conducting the renovation activity.

#### **VI. STIPULATIONS**

23. The issuance of this CAFO simultaneously commences and concludes this proceeding. 40 C.F.R. § 22.13(b).

24. For the purpose of this proceeding, as required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2), Respondent:

- a. admits that EPA has jurisdiction over the subject matter alleged in this CAFO;
- b. neither admits nor denies the factual allegations set forth in the “Findings of Facts” of this CAFO;
- c. consents to the assessment of a civil penalty as stated below;
- d. consents to the conditions specified in this CAFO;
- e. waives any right to contest the allegations set forth in Section V (Alleged Violations) of this CAFO; and
- f. waives its rights to appeal the Final Order accompanying this CAFO.

25. For the purpose of this proceeding, Respondent:

- a. agrees that this CAFO states a claim upon which relief may be granted against Respondent;
- b. acknowledges that this CAFO constitutes an enforcement action for purposes of considering Respondent’s compliance history in any subsequent enforcement actions;
- c. waives any rights it may possess at law or in equity to challenge the authority of EPA to bring a civil action in a United States District Court to compel compliance with the CAFO, and to seek an additional penalty for such noncompliance, and agrees that federal law shall govern in any such civil action;
- d. by executing this CAFO, certifies to the best of its knowledge that Respondent is currently in compliance with all relevant requirements of the Act and its implementing regulations and that all violations alleged herein, which are neither admitted nor denied, have been corrected;
- e. waives any right it may have pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.8 to be present during any discussions with, or to be served with and reply to, any memorandum or communication addressed to EPA officials where the purpose of such discussion, memorandum, or communication is to persuade such official to accept and issue this CAFO; and
- f. agrees to comply with the terms of the CAFO.

26. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.5, the individuals named in the certificate of service are authorized to receive service related to this proceeding and the parties agree to receive service by electronic means.

## **VII. TERMS OF PAYMENT**

27. Respondent consents to the payment of a civil penalty, which was calculated in accordance with the Act, in the amount of **\$6,500**, which is to be paid within thirty (30) calendar days of the Effective Date of this CAFO.

28. Payment(s) shall be made by cashier’s check, certified check, by electronic funds transfer (EFT), or by Automated Clearing House (ACH) (also known as REX or remittance express). If paying by check, the check shall be payable to: Treasurer, United States of America, and the Respondent name and docket number for this matter shall be referenced on the face of the check. If Respondent sends payment by the U.S. Postal Service, the payment shall be addressed to:

United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Fines and Penalties  
Cincinnati Finance Center  
P.O. Box 979077  
St. Louis, Missouri 63197-9000

If Respondent sends payment by non-U.S. Postal express mail delivery, the payment shall be sent to:

U.S. Bank  
Government Lockbox 979077  
U.S. EPA Fines & Penalties  
1005 Convention Plaza  
Mail Station: SL-MO-C2-GL  
St. Louis, Missouri 63101  
Contact Number: (314) 425-1819

If paying by EFT, Respondent shall transfer the payment to:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York  
ABA: 021030004  
Account Number: 68010727  
SWIFT address: FRNYUS33  
33 Liberty Street  
New York, New York 10045  
Field Tag 4200 of the Fedwire message should read:  
“D 68010727 Environmental Protection Agency”

If paying by ACH, Respondent shall remit payment to:

US Treasury REX / Cashlink ACH Receiver  
ABA: 051036706  
Account Number: 310006, Environmental Protection Agency  
CTX Format Transaction Code 22 – checking  
Physical location of US Treasury facility:  
5700 Rivertech Court  
Riverdale, Maryland 20737

Contact: John Schmid, (202) 874-7026  
REX (Remittance Express): 1-866-234-5681

29. Respondent shall send proof of payment, within 24 hours of payment of the civil penalty, to:

Regional Hearing Clerk  
U.S. EPA Region 4  
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960  
Bullock.Patricia@epa.gov

and

Pamela Storm  
Air Enforcement Branch  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. EPA Region 4  
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960  
storm.pamela@epa.gov

30. “Proof of payment” means, as applicable, a copy of the check, confirmation of credit card or debit card payment, confirmation of wire or automated clearinghouse transfer, and any other information required to demonstrate that payment has been made according to EPA requirements, in the amount due, and identified with the Respondent name and Docket No. CAA-04-2020-0004(b).
31. Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d)(5), if Respondent fails to timely pay any portion of the penalty assessed under this CAFO, EPA may recover in addition to the amount of the unpaid penalty assessed, the following amounts on any amount overdue:
- a. Interest. Interest will begin to accrue on the civil penalty from the Effective Date of this CAFO. If the civil penalty is paid within 30 days of the Effective Date of this CAFO, Interest is waived. However, if the civil penalty is not paid in full within 30 days of the Effective Date of this CAFO, Interest will continue to accrue on any unpaid portion until the unpaid portion of the civil penalty and accrued Interest are paid. Interest will be assessed at rates established pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 6621(a)(2).
  - b. Non-Payment Penalty. A 10 percent quarterly nonpayment penalty pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d)(5).
  - c. Attorneys’ Fees and Costs of Collection. The United States enforcement expenses, including, but not limited to, attorneys’ fees and cost of collection.
32. If Respondent fails to timely pay any portion of the penalty assessed in this CAFO, EPA may:
- a. Refer the debt to a credit reporting agency or a collection agency pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §§ 13.13 and 13.14;
  - b. Collect the debt by administrative offset (i.e., the withholding of money payable by the United States to, or held by the United States for, a person to satisfy the debt the person owes the Government), which includes, but is not limited to, referral to the Internal Revenue Service for offset against income tax refunds, 40 C.F.R. Part 13, Subparts C and H;
  - c. Suspend or revoke Respondent’s licenses or other privileges, or suspend or disqualify Respondent from doing business with EPA or engaging in programs EPA sponsors or funds, 40 C.F.R. § 13.17; and/or
  - d. Request that the Attorney General bring a civil action in the appropriate district court to recover the amount assessed, in addition to the amounts described above, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d)(5). In any such action, the validity, amount, and appropriateness of the penalty and of this CAFO shall not be subject to review.

33. Penalties paid pursuant to this CAFO shall not be deductible for purposes of federal taxes.

### **VIII. EFFECT OF CAFO**

34. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c), Respondent's full compliance with this CAFO shall only resolve Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations and facts specifically alleged above.

35. Full payment of the civil penalty, as provided in Section VII (Terms of Payment), shall not in any case affect the right of EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law. 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c).

36. Any violation of this CAFO may result in a civil judicial action for civil penalties as provided in Section 113(b) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(b), as well as criminal sanctions as provided in Section 113(c) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(c). EPA may use any information submitted under this CAFO in an administrative, civil judicial, or criminal action.

37. Nothing in this CAFO shall relieve Respondent of the duty to comply with all applicable provisions of the Act and other federal, state, or local laws or statutes, nor shall it restrict EPA's authority to seek compliance with any applicable laws or regulations, nor shall it be construed to be a ruling on, or determination of, any issue related to any federal, state, or local permit, except as expressly provided herein.

38. Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the power of EPA to undertake any action against Respondent or any person in response to conditions that may present an imminent and substantial endangerment as provided under the Act.

39. The terms, conditions, and compliance requirements of this CAFO may not be modified or amended except upon the written agreement of both Parties, and approval of the Regional Judicial Officer.

40. The provisions of this CAFO shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent and its officers, directors, employees, agents, trustees, servants, authorized representatives, successors, and assigns.

41. Any change in the legal status of the Respondent, or change in ownership, partnership, corporate or legal status relating to the Facility, will not in any way alter Respondent's obligations and responsibilities under this CAFO.

42. By signing this Consent Agreement, Respondent acknowledges that this CAFO will be available to the public and agrees that this CAFO does not contain any confidential business information or personally identifiable information.

43. By signing this Consent Agreement, the Complainant and the undersigned representative of Respondent each certify that he or she is fully authorized to execute and enter into the terms and conditions of this CAFO and has the legal capacity to bind the party he or she represents to this CAFO.

44. By signing this Consent Agreement, both Parties agree that each party's obligations under this CAFO constitute sufficient consideration for the other party's obligations.
45. By signing this Consent Agreement, Respondent certifies that the information it has supplied concerning this matter was at the time of submission, and continues to be, true, accurate, and complete for each such submission, response, and statement. Respondent acknowledges that there are significant penalties for submitting false or misleading information, including the possibility of fines and imprisonment for knowing submission of such information, under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.
46. EPA also reserves the right to revoke this CAFO and settlement penalty if and to the extent that EPA finds, after signing this CAFO, that any information provided by Respondent was materially false or inaccurate at the time such information was provided to EPA. If such false or inaccurate material was provided, EPA reserves the right to assess and collect any and all civil penalties for any violation described herein. EPA shall give Respondent notice of its intent to revoke, which shall not be effective until received by Respondent in writing.
47. It is the intent of the parties that the provisions of this CAFO are severable. If any provision or authority of this CAFO or the application of this CAFO to any party or circumstances is held by any judicial or administrative authority to be invalid or unenforceable, the application of such provisions to other parties or circumstances and the remainder of the CAFO shall remain in force and shall not be affected thereby.
48. Unless specifically stated otherwise in this CAFO, each party shall bear its own attorney's fees, costs, and disbursements incurred in this proceeding.

#### **IX. EFFECTIVE DATE**

49. This CAFO shall become effective after execution of the Final Order by the Regional Judicial Officer, on the date of filing with the Hearing Clerk.

**[Remainder of Page Intentionally Left Blank]**

**[Complainant and Respondent will Each Sign on Separate Pages]**



The foregoing Consent Agreement In the Matter of **Bella Vista of Rome, LLC**, Docket No. CAA-04-2020-0004(b) is Hereby Stipulated, Agreed, and Approved for Entry.

FOR RESPONDENT:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

8/18/2020  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Printed Name: Thomas J. Free

Title: Manager

Address: 3 Central Plaza #371 Rome, GA 30161

The foregoing Consent Agreement In the Matter of **Bella Vista of Rome, LLC, Docket No. CAA-04-2020-0004(b)** is Hereby Stipulated, Agreed, and Approved for Entry.

FOR COMPLAINANT:

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Carol L. Kemker  
Director  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4

In the Matter of:

**Bella Vista of Rome, LLC,**

Respondent.

Docket No. **CAA-04-2020-0004(b)**

FINAL ORDER

The Regional Judicial Officer is authorized to ratify this Consent Agreement which memorializes a settlement between Complainant and Respondent. 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.4(b) and 22.18(b)(3). The foregoing Consent Agreement is, therefore, hereby approved, ratified and incorporated by reference into this Final Order in accordance with the *Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits*, 40 C.F.R. Part 22.

The Respondent is hereby ORDERED to comply with all of the terms of the foregoing Consent Agreement effective immediately upon filing of this Consent Agreement and Final Order with the Regional Hearing Clerk. This Final Order disposes of this matter pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.18 and 22.31.

**BEING AGREED, IT IS SO ORDERED.**

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Tanya Floyd  
Regional Judicial Officer

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order, in the Matter of **Bella Vista of Rome, LLC, Docket No. CAA-04-2020-0004(b)**, were filed and copies of the same were emailed to the parties as indicated below.

**Via email to all parties at the following email addresses:**

To Respondent:        Mr. Jason Free, Owner  
                              Bella Vista of Rome, LLC  
                              realestate@jasonfree.com  
                              270 Marion Dairy Road  
                              Lindale, Georgia 30147  
                              (770) 324-5364

To EPA:                    Pamela Storm, Region 4 Asbestos Coordinator  
                              Storm.Pamela@epa.gov  
                              (404) 562-9197

                              Lucia Mendez, Attorney-Advisor  
                              Mendez.Lucia@epa.gov  
                              (404) 562-9637

                              U.S. EPA Region 4  
                              61 Forsyth Street, S.W.  
                              Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960

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Patricia A. Bullock, Regional Hearing Clerk  
U.S. EPA Region 4  
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960