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June 6, 2008

Regional Hearing Clerk (E-13J)
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

Re: John A. Biewer of Ohio
RCRA-05-2008-0006

Dear Clerk:

Enclosed for filing in the above-referenced case are Answer to Complaint and Compliance Order, and Certificate of Service filed on behalf of John A. Biewer Co. of Ohio.

Very truly yours,



Douglas A. Donnell

jeb

Enclosure

cc: Douglas S. Touma, Sr.
Michael Cunningham
Richard R. Wagner
Harry Sarvis
Michael Terpinski

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5**

IN THE MATTER OF:

John A. Biewer Company of Toledo, Inc.
300 Oak Street
St. Clair, Michigan 48079-0497
(Perrysburg Facility)

DOCKET NO: RCRA-05-2008-0006

**ANSWER TO COMPLAINT AND
COMPLIANCE ORDER**

U.S. EPA ID #: OHD 106 483 522

RESPONDENT
_____ /

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NOW COMES Respondent, by and through its attorneys, Mika Meyers Beckett & Jones PLC, and for its answer to EPA's Complaint and Compliance Order, states and alleges as follows:

Preliminary Statement

1. This is a civil administrative action brought by the United States Environmental Protection Agency Administrator under Section 3008(a) of the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended, also known as the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as amended (RCRA), 42 U.S.C. §6928(a), and pursuant to Sections 22.01(a)(4), 22.13 and 22.37 of the "Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, Issuance or Compliance or Corrective Action Orders, and the Revocation, Termination or Suspension of Permits" (the Administrator's Rules"), 64 Fed. Reg. 40137 (July 23, 1999), codified at 40 C.F.R. Part 22 (July 1, 2000).

ANSWER: The allegations contained in paragraph 1 constitute legal conclusions for which no response is required.

2. By lawful delegation, Complainant, the Director, Land and Chemicals Division, Region 5, U.S. EPA, is authorized to issue this Complaint.

ANSWER: Without admitting or denying any substantive allegations in the complaint, Respondent admits that the Director of Land and Chemicals Division, Region 5, is authorized to issue complaints of this type.

3. Pursuant to Sections 3001 - 3005 of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §6921-6925, the Administrator has promulgated regulations governing generators and transporters of hazardous waste, and

governing facilities that treat, store and dispose of hazardous waste. At all times relevant to this Complaint, those regulations were codified at 40 C.F.R. Parts 260 through 279.

ANSWER: Admitted.

4. Pursuant to Section 3006(b) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §6926(b), the Administrator granted the State of Ohio final authorization to administer a state hazardous waste program in lieu of the federal government's RCRA program effective, June 30, 1989. 54 Fed. Reg. 27170 (June 28, 1989). The U.S. EPA granted Ohio final authorization to administer certain Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984, and additional RCRA requirements, effective June 7, 1991, 56 Fed. Reg. 14203 (April 8, 1991) (corrected effective August 19, 1991, 56 Fed. Reg. 28088 (June 19, 1991); September 25, 1995, 60 Fed. Reg. 38502 (July 27, 1995); and December 23, 1996, 61 Fed. Reg. 54950 (October 23, 1996). The U.S. EPA authorized Ohio regulations are codified at Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Chapters 3745-49 through 69. See also 40 C.F.R. §272.1800 *et seq.*

ANSWER: The allegations contained in paragraph 4 constitute legal conclusions for which no answer is required. To the extent an answer is deemed required, the allegations in paragraph 4 are neither admitted nor denied for lack of information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth thereof. By way of further response, the section of the Ohio Administrative Code cited in paragraph 4 relating to drip pads did not become effective until September 2, 1997, after Respondent's facility in Perrysburg, Ohio ceased operations.

5. At all times relevant to this Complaint, Section 3006(d) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §6926(d), provided that any action taken by a State under a hazardous waste program authorized under this section shall have the same force and effect as action taken by the Administrator under Subchapter III of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §§6921-6939(e).

ANSWER: The allegations contained in paragraph 5 constitute legal conclusions for which no answer is required.

6. Pursuant to Section 3008(a)(3) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §6928(a)(3), the Administrator may assess a civil penalty of up to \$25,000 per day of noncompliance for each violation of a requirement of Subchapter III of RCRA (Sections 3001-3023, 42 U.S.C. §§6921-6939(e).

ANSWER: The allegations contained in paragraph 6 constitute legal conclusions for which no answer is required. By way of further answer, Respondent denies that EPA has blanket authority to assess civil penalties up to \$25,000 per day, regardless of the nature of the alleged noncompliance and alleges that penalties, if any, must be determined on a case-by-case basis.

7. U.S. EPA has provided notice of commencement of this action to the State of Ohio, as required by Section 3008(a)(2) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §6928(a)(2).

ANSWER: The allegations in paragraph 7 are neither admitted nor denied for lack of information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth thereof.

GENERAL ALLEGATIONS

8. The Respondent, John A. Biewer Company of Toledo, Inc., was at all times relevant to this Complaint a corporation incorporated under the laws of Michigan.

ANSWER: Admitted.

9. That Respondent is a “person” as defined by Section 1004(15) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §6903(15), and OAC 3745-50-10.

ANSWER: Admitted.

10. That from approximately 1976 to June 2001, the Respondent conducted its business in, and around, buildings located at 13010 Eckel Junction Road, Perrysburg, Ohio.

ANSWER: Denied. Respondent operated the facility in Perrysburg, Ohio from 1983 until 1997, when operations ceased.

11. That the place where the Respondent conducted its business was, and is, a “facility” as defined by OAC 3745-50-10.

ANSWER: Respondent neither admits nor denies that the property located on Eckel Junction Road is actually a “facility,” but acknowledges that it has been referred to as such by both the Ohio EPA and the consultants, Mannik & Smith Group.

12. That the Respondent was the “owner” or “operator” of that facility, as defined by OAC 3745-50-10.

ANSWER: Respondent admits that it is the “owner” of the property on Eckel Junction Road, admits that it was the “operator” of the property from 1983 until 1997, and neither admits nor denies that the property is a “facility” as stated above.

13. That in conducting its business, Respondent pressure-treated wood with a chemical solution, that being chromated copper arsenate.

ANSWER: Admitted.

14. That in its production process, after Respondent pressure-treated wood with a chromated copper arsenate, it transported the treated wood by rail to a drip pad in a building on its facility grounds, where the wood underwent a preservative reaction.

ANSWER: Admitted.

15. That, as the wood underwent a preservative reaction on the drip pad, excess chemical solution on the wood either evaporated or fell off of the wood onto the drip pad as waste.

ANSWER: The allegations contained in paragraph 15 are denied because they are not true. The excess chemical solution that fell off of wood onto the drip pad was captured and reused.

16. That in 1997 Respondent ceased its operation as described in Paragraphs 13 through 15.

ANSWER: Admitted.

17. That constituents of chromated copper arsenate include greater than 5% chromic acid (CAS #7738-94-5); arsenic acid (CAS #7778-39-4); and copper oxide (CAS #1317-38-0).

ANSWER: Admitted.

18. That waste material generated by the Company, identified in Paragraph 15, was a "solid waste," as defined by Section 1004(27) of RCRA, and by OAC 3745-51-02.

ANSWER: The allegation contained in paragraph 18 is vague and ambiguous with regard to the phrase "waste material generated." Respondent admits that the chromated copper arsenate that was cleaned off the drip pad and shipped to a hazardous waste facility was "solid waste."

19. That waste material generated by the Company, identified in Paragraph 15, was waste listed as "hazardous," OAC 3745-51-31, and identified by U.S. EPA as hazardous waste No. F035. See 46 Fed. Reg. 4617 (January 16, 1981).

ANSWER: The allegation contained in paragraph 19 is vague and ambiguous with regard to the phrase "waste material generated" and, thus, the allegation is neither admitted nor denied. Respondent admits that chromated copper arsenate, if disposed of as a waste, may be a hazardous waste, depending on concentration. Respondent neither admits nor denies the accumulation of such waste at the property. By way of further response, Respondent admits that its material was listed as F035 by 46 Fed.Reg. 4617 (January 16, 1981).

20. That waste material generated by the Company, identified in Paragraph 15, was a “hazardous waste,” as defined by Section 1004(5) of RCRA, and by OAC 3745-51-03.

ANSWER: The allegation contained in paragraph 20 is vague and ambiguous with regard to the phrase “waste material generated”, and thus the allegation is neither admitted nor denied. Respondent admits that chromated copper arsenate, if disposed of as a waste may, depending on concentration, be a hazardous waste, but neither admits nor denies the accumulation of such waste at the property.

ALLEGED VIOLATION: FAILURE TO MEET CLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

21. Complainant incorporates Paragraphs 1 through 20 of this Complaint as though set forth in this paragraph.

ANSWER: Respondent repeats, as if fully set forth herein, its responses to paragraphs 1 through 20 above.

22. That Ohio Rules 3745-69-40 through 3745-69-45 constitute the effective RCRA requirements governing drip pads in Ohio, in lieu of 40 C.F.R. Part 265, Subpart W. See Paragraph 4.

ANSWER: The allegations in paragraph 22 constitute legal conclusions for which no answer is required. By way of further response, the cited sections of the Ohio Administrative Code did not become effective until after operations had ceased at Respondent’s Eckel Junction Road property.

23. That OAC 3745-69-45 provides that: “At closure, the owner or operator must remove or decontaminate all waste residues, contaminated containment system components (pad, liners, etc.), contaminated subsoils, and structures and equipment contaminated with waste and leakage, and manage them as hazardous waste.”

ANSWER: The allegations in paragraph 23 constitute legal conclusions for which no answer is required. By way of further response, Respondent admits that paragraph 23, with one minor error, accurately quotes OAC 3745-69-45 (A).

24. That on November 23, 2004, Respondent had prepared on its behalf a Closure Activity Report (Report), identifying its plan to carry out closure activities, pursuant to the requirements of the OAC, at its drip pad.

ANSWER: Admitted.

25. That on June 7, 2005, and October 5, 2005, consistent with the Report, Respondent conducted decontamination procedures for closure at its drip pad, consisting of the removal of loose material by shoveling and/or dry vacuuming, followed by two cycles of pressure washing and wet vacuuming.

ANSWER: Admitted.

26. That analysis of samples of the rinseate resulting from the decontamination procedures, identified in Paragraph 25, revealed that the rinseate contained levels of arsenic and chromium significantly above remediation standards identified in the Report.

ANSWER: Admitted.

27. That since October 5, 2005, Respondent has failed to take further actions at its drip pad necessary to remove or decontaminate all waste residues, containment system components, contaminated subsoils, and structure and equipment contaminated with waste and leakage, and manage them as hazardous waste.

ANSWER: The allegations contained in paragraph 27 are denied because they are not true. Since October 5, 2005, at least the following additional actions have been taken:

12/05 Respondent sent Ohio EPA an amended closure plan.

1/06 Respondent received a letter from the Ohio EPA stating that the closure plan was incomplete and inadequate, and worked on the matters raised in that letter.

3/06 Respondent called Ohio EPA (Kelly Theil) and advised that it was still working on an amended and corrected closure plan.

Respondent met with Mannik & Smith Group (consultants) to discuss the next step of locating piping and preparing "as built" drawing requested in the Ohio EPA letter received in January, 2006.

Respondent also discussed costs and told the consultant that when funds became available, it would continue the project.

10/06 Respondent received the US EPA violation letter.

4th quarter, 2007 – 1st quarter, 2008 Respondent held additional discussions with the consultant about continuing the project.

28. That in failing to take actions necessary to remove and decontaminate all hazardous waste material related to the operation of its drip pad, as alleged in Paragraphs 26 and 27, Respondent has failed to comply with OAC 3745-69-45, thereby violating Subchapter III of RCRA,

subjecting the Company to the assessment of civil penalties, as provided for in Section 3008(a) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §6928(a).

ANSWER: The allegations in paragraph 28 constitute legal conclusions for which no answer is required. To the extent an answer is required, the allegations are neither admitted nor denied for lack of information sufficient to form a belief as the truth thereof.

PROPOSED CIVIL PENALTY

By Section 3008(a) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §6928(a), Congress has authorized the Administrator to assess a civil penalty of up to \$25,000 per day for each violation of Subtitle C of RCRA, 42 U.S.C., Subchapter III. Pursuant to the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act of 1990, 28 U.S.C. §2461, as amended by the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, 31 U.S.C. § 3701, and regulations promulgated thereunder, the Administrator may assess a civil penalty of up to \$27,500 per day for each such violation of RCRA occurring from January 31, 1997, to March 15, 2004, and a civil penalty of up to \$32,000 per day for each such violation of RCRA occurring after March 15, 2004. See 40 C.F.R. Part 19 (July 1, 2005).

Complainant has determined the amount of proposed civil penalty for violations alleged in this Complaint based upon an analysis of relevant evidence known to the Complainant, in consideration of Section 3008(a)(3) of RCRA, 42 U.S.C. §6928(a)(3), by which Congress requires that the Administrator, in assessing a civil penalty, take into account “the seriousness of the violation and any good faith efforts to comply with applicable requirements.” The analysis incorporated the Administrator’s adopted policy, “RCRA Civil Penalty Policy” (June 23, 2003) (“the Policy”), interpreting the RCRA penalty criteria. A copy of the Policy is available upon request. The Policy of the Administrator provides a consistent method of applying the statutory penalty factors for violations of Subtitle C of RCRA, 42 U.S.C., Subchapter III.

The penalty amount determined appropriate for the violations alleged in this Complaint is \$287,441. See attached Penalty Summary Sheet.

ANSWER: Respondent neither admits nor denies the legal allegations contained in the “Proposed Civil Penalty” portion of the complaint, and further responds that the asserted penalty of \$287,441 is excessive.

REQUEST FOR HEARING

Respondent hereby requests a public hearing as provided in 43 U.S.C. §6928(b) and as offered in the complaint.

REQUEST FOR SETTLEMENT CONFERENCE

Respondent hereby requests an informal conference to discuss possible settlement of this matter.

Dated: June 6, 2008

MIKA MEYERS BECKETT & JONES PLC
Attorneys for John A. Biewer Company of Toledo,
Inc.

By: 
Douglas A. Donnell (P33187)

Business Address:
900 Monroe Avenue, NW
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
(616) 632-8000

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5

IN THE MATTER OF:

John A. Biewer Company of Toledo, Inc.
300 Oak Street
St. Clair, Michigan 48079-0497
(Perrysburg Facility)

DOCKET NO: RCRA-05-2008-0007

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

U.S. EPA ID #: OHD 081 281 412

RESPONDENT

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I, Jane E. Blakemore, hereby state that I am the secretary for Douglas A. Donnell, and that on June 6, 2008, I served a copy of:

Answer to Complaint and Compliance Order

upon the following individuals by placing the same in the U. S. Mail, first-class postage prepaid:

Michael Cunningham (LR-8J)
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5, RCRA Branch
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604-3590


Richard R. Wagner, Senior Attorney
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Columbus, OH 43216-1049

Michael Terpinski
Ohio EPA, NW District Office
347 North Dunbridge Road
Bowling Green, OH 43402

I declare that the statements above are true to the best of my information, knowledge and belief.

Dated: June 6, 2008


Jane E. Blakemore