

**UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2**

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY-REG.2
2009 JUN 30 PM 4:33
REGIONAL HEARING
OFFICE

IN THE MATTER OF:

Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority
("PRASA")
Anones Public Water System
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico 00917

Respondent

Proceeding Pursuant to §1414(g)(3)(B) of the
Safe Drinking Water Act, 42 U.S.C. §300g-
3(g)(3)(B)

Proceeding to Assess Civil Penalty
Under Section 1414(g)(3)(B) of the
Safe Drinking Water Act

Docket No.
SDWA-02-2009-8405

**COMPLAINT,
FINDINGS OF VIOLATION, NOTICE OF PROPOSED ASSESSMENT OF A CIVIL
PENALTY AND NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO REQUEST A HEARING**

I. Statutory Authority

1. This Complaint, Findings of Violation, Notice of Proposed Assessment of a Civil Penalty and Notice of Opportunity to Request a Hearing ("Complaint") is issued under the authority vested in the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") by Section 1414(g)(3)(B) of the Safe Drinking Water Act ("SDWA" or "Act"), 42 U.S.C. §300g-3(g)(3)(B) and duly delegated to the Director of the Division of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance of EPA Region 2 ("Complainant").
2. Pursuant to Section 1414(g)(3)(B) of the Act, and in accordance with the "Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, Issuance of Compliance or Corrective Action Orders, and the Revocation, Termination or Suspension of Permits" ("CROP"), 40 C.F.R. Part 22, a copy of which is attached, Complainant hereby requests that a civil penalty be assessed against the Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority ("PRASA" or "Respondent") for the violation of an Administrative Order ("AO" or "Order") issued pursuant to Section 1414(g) of the SDWA. The AO requires compliance with an applicable requirement of the Act at its Anones Public Water System ("PWS"), located in Naranjito, Puerto Rico.

II. Findings of Violation

1. Respondent owns and operates the Anones “public water system,” within the meaning of Section 1401(4) of the SDWA, 42 U.S.C. §300f(4), and 40 C.F.R. §141.2, located in Naranjito, Puerto Rico.
2. Respondent is a public corporation and an autonomous governmental instrumentality of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, organized and existing under the Laws of Puerto Rico, P.R. Laws Ann. Tit. 22, §§142, 144 (1987), is a “person” within the meaning of Section 1401(12) of the SDWA, 42 U.S.C. §300f(12), and 40 C.F.R. §141.2, and is subject to an AO issued under Section 1414(g)(1) of the SDWA, 42 U.S.C. §300g-3(g)(1).
3. The Anones PWS is supplied by a surface water source, and provides piped water for human consumption and regularly serves at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 individuals, and is therefore a “community water system” as defined by Section 1401(15) of the SDWA, 42 U.S.C. §300f (15) and 40 C.F.R. §141.2.
4. The Anones PWS uses conventional filtration, as defined in 40 C.F.R. §141.2.
5. On January 14, 2002, EPA promulgated the Long Term I Enhanced Surface Water Treatment Rule (“LT1ESWTR”), 40 C.F.R. Part 141 Subpart T. LT1ESWTR increases public health protection from microbial pathogens, particularly *Cryptosporidium*. LT1ESWTR builds upon existing treatment technique requirements established by the 1989 Surface Water Treatment Rule by requiring systems using conventional and direct filtration to comply with strengthened turbidity standards and conduct continuous monitoring of individual filter effluent turbidity.
6. The Puerto Rico Department of Health (“PRDOH”) administers the Public Water Supply Supervision Program in Puerto Rico pursuant to Section 1413 of the SDWA. The approval and delegation of primary enforcement responsibility from EPA to PRDOH was effective as of March 1, 1980. However, at the time the LT1ESWTR came into effect, the PRDOH had not obtained enforcement responsibility for this rule; therefore, EPA issued enforcement actions against PRASA for violations to the LT1ESWTR. On October 18, 2005, EPA granted enforcement primacy for the LT1ESWTR to the PRDOH; however, EPA retained enforcement responsibility for the LT1ESWTR in regard to the Anones PWS.
7. PWSs using surface water or ground water under the direct influence (“GWUDI”) of surface water as a source and serving fewer than 10,000 people are required to comply with the LT1ESWTR by January 1, 2005, as per 40 C.F.R. §§141.501 and 141.502.
8. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §141.551, public water systems that provide conventional or direct filtration treatment must meet a 95th percentile turbidity limit of 0.3 NTU of the

combined filter effluent measurements taken each month and, at no time, may the turbidity exceed 1 NTU.

9. The Respondent's Anones PWS utilizes a surface water source and serves fewer than 10,000 people, and, therefore, is required to comply with the requirements of the LT1ESWTR by January 1, 2005.
10. Based on reports submitted to EPA by PRDOH, the Anones PWS failed to meet the 0.3 NTU turbidity limit in at least 95% of the combined filter effluent measurements taken during the months of January 2005 (37.72%), February 2005 (32.77%), March 2005 (55.5%), April 2005 (33.10%), May 2005 (33.75%) and June 2005 (31.65%).
11. On September 2, 2005, EPA issue an AO, Docket No. SDWA-02-2005-8183, to Respondent, under authority of Section 1414 (g) of the SDWA, 42 U.S.C. §300g-3(g), for failure to comply with the requirements of the LT1ESWTR and the SDWA. The AO required the Anones PWS to comply with the combined filter effluent turbidity limits by December 2, 2005. A copy of the AO is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.
12. Respondent has failed to comply with the combined filter effluent turbidity limits, in violation of the requirements of the LT1ESWTR and the SDWA.

COUNT 1

13. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §141.551, PWSs that provide conventional or direct filtration must meet a 95th percentile turbidity limit of 0.3 NTU of the combined filter effluent measurements taken each month and, at no time may the turbidity exceed 1 NTU.
14. Paragraph 11 of the AO requires Respondent to comply with the combined filter effluent limits at the Anones PWS by December 2, 2005.
15. Respondent failed to demonstrate compliance with the combined filter effluent turbidity limits specified in 40 C.F.R. §141.551 by the date specified in the AO.
17. Respondent, has failed, therefore, to demonstrate compliance with the requirements specified in 40 C.F.R. §151.551 and Paragraph 11 of the AO.

III. Notice of Proposed Order Assessing a Civil Penalty

Based on the foregoing Findings of Violation, and pursuant to the authority of Section 1414(g)(3)(B) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. §300g-3(g)(3)(B), EPA, Region 2 hereby proposes to issue a Final Order Assessing Administrative Penalties ("Final Order") to Respondent assessing a penalty of **Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00)**. EPA determined the proposed penalty after taking into account the applicable factors identified at Section 1414(g) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. §300g-3(g). EPA has taken into account the seriousness of the violation(s), the population at risk and other appropriate factors, in light of information currently available to it.

IV. Procedures Governing This Administrative Litigation

The rules of procedure governing this civil administrative litigation have been set forth in 40 C.F.R. Part 22. This proceeding will be conducted in accordance with the CROP, including Subpart I thereof; unless, in the Answer, Respondent requests a hearing on the record in accordance with Section 554 of the Administrative Procedures Act, 5 U.S.C. §554, in which case Subpart I shall not apply.

A. Answering the Complaint

Where Respondent intends to contest any material fact upon which the Complaint is based, to contend that the proposed penalty is inappropriate or to contend that Respondent is entitled to judgment as a matter of law, Respondent must file with the Regional Hearing Clerk of EPA, Region 2, both an original and one copy of a written Answer to the Complaint, and such Answer must be filed within thirty (30) days after service of the Complaint. 40 C.F.R. §22.15(a). The address of the Regional Hearing Clerk of EPA, Region 2, is:

Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
290 Broadway, 16th floor
New York, New York 10007-1866

Respondent shall also then serve one copy of the Answer to the Complaint upon Complainant and any other party to the action, 40 C.F.R. §22.15(a).

Respondent's Answer to the Complaint must clearly and directly admit, deny, or explain each of the factual allegations that are contained in the Complaint and with regard to which Respondent has any knowledge. 40 C.F.R. §22.15(b). Where Respondent lacks knowledge of a particular factual allegation and so states in its Answer, the allegation is deemed denied. 40 C.F.R. §22.15(b). The Answer shall also set forth: (1) the circumstances or arguments that are alleged to constitute the grounds of defense, (2) the facts that Respondent disputes (and thus intends to place at issue in the proceeding), (3) the basis for opposing the proposed relief and (4) whether Respondent requests a hearing. 40 C.F.R. §22.15(b).

Respondent's failure affirmatively to rise in the Answer facts that constitute or that might constitute the grounds of its defense may preclude Respondent, at a subsequent stage in this proceeding, from raising such facts and/or from having such facts admitted into evidence at a hearing.

B. Opportunity to Request a Hearing

If requested by Respondent in its Answer, a hearing upon the issues raised by the Complaint and Answer may be held. 40 C.F.R. §22.15(c). If, however, Respondent does not request a hearing, the Presiding Officer (as defined in 40 C.F.R. §22.3) may hold a hearing if the Answer raises issues appropriate for adjudication. 40 C.F.R. §22.15(c).

Any hearing in this proceeding will be held at a location determined in accordance with 40 C.F.R. §22.21(d). A hearing of this matter will be conducted in accordance with the applicable provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act, 5 U.S.C. §§551-59, and the procedures set forth in Subpart D of 40 C.F.R. Part 22.

C. Failure to Answer

If Respondent fails in its Answer to admit, deny, or explain any material factual allegation contained in the Complaint, such failure constitutes an admission of the allegation. 40 C.F.R. §22.15(d). If Respondent fails to file a timely [i.e. in accordance with the 30-day period set forth in 40 C.F.R. §22.15(a)] Answer to the Complaint, Respondent may be found in default upon motion. 40 C.F.R. §22.17(a). Default by Respondent constitutes, for purposes of the pending proceeding only, an admission of all facts alleged in the Complaint and a waiver of Respondent's right to contest such factual allegations. 40 C.F.R. §22.17(a). Following a default by Respondent for a failure to timely file an Answer to the Complaint, any order issued therefore shall be issued pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §22.17(c).

Any penalty assessed in the default order shall become due and payable by Respondent without further proceedings thirty (30) days after the Default Order becomes final pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §22.27(c). 40 C.F.R. §22.17(d). If necessary, EPA may then seek to enforce such Final Order of Default against Respondent, and to collect the assessed penalty amount, in federal court.

V. Informal Settlement Conference

Whether or not Respondent requests a formal hearing, EPA encourages settlement of this proceeding consistent with the provisions of the Act and its applicable regulations. 40 C.F.R. §22.18(b). At an informal conference with a representative(s) of Complainant, Respondent may comment on the charges made in this Complaint, and Respondent may also provide whatever additional information that it believes is relevant to the disposition of this matter, including: (1) actions Respondent has taken to correct any or all of the violations herein alleged, (2) any information relevant to Complainant's calculation of the proposed penalty, (3) the effect the proposed penalty would have on Respondent's ability to continue in business and/or (4) any other special facts or circumstances Respondent wishes to raise.

Complainant has the authority to modify the amount of the proposed penalty, where appropriate, to reflect any settlement agreement reached with Respondent, to reflect any relevant information previously not known to Complainant or to dismiss any or all of the charges, if Respondent can demonstrate that the relevant allegations are without merit and that no cause of action as herein alleged exists. Respondent is referred to 40 C.F.R. §22.18.

Any request for an informal conference or any questions that Respondent may have regarding this Complaint should be directed to:

Diane Gomes, Esq.,
Assistant Regional Counsel
Office of Regional Counsel
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
290 Broadway, 16th floor
New York, New York 10007-1866
(212) 637-3235

The parties may engage in settlement discussions irrespective of whether Respondent has requested a hearing. 40 C.F.R. §22.18(b)(1). Respondent's requesting a formal hearing does not prevent it from also requesting an informal settlement conference; the informal conference procedure may be pursued simultaneously with the formal adjudicatory hearing procedure. A request for an informal settlement conference constitutes neither an admission nor a denial of any of the matters alleged in the Complaint. Complainant does not deem a request for an informal settlement conference as a request for a hearing as specified in 40 C.F.R. §22.15(c).

A request for an informal settlement conference does not affect Respondent's obligation to file a timely Answer to the Complaint pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §22.15. No penalty reduction, however, will be made simply because an informal settlement conference is held.

Any settlement that may be reached as a result of an informal settlement conference shall be embodied in a written Consent Agreement. 40 C.F.R. §22.18(b)(2). In accepting the Consent Agreement, Respondent waives its right to contest the allegations in the Complaint and waives its right to appeal the Final Order that is to accompany the Consent Agreement. 40 C.F.R. §22.18(b)(2). In order to conclude the proceeding, a Final Order ratifying the parties' agreement to settle will be executed. 40 C.F.R. §22.18(b)(3).

Respondent's entering into a settlement through the signing of such Consent Agreement and its complying with the terms and conditions set forth in such Consent Agreement terminates this administrative litigation and the civil proceedings arising out of the allegations made in the Complaint. Respondent's entering into a settlement does not extinguish, waive, satisfy or otherwise affect its obligation and responsibility to comply with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and to maintain such compliance.

VI. Resolution of this Proceeding without Hearing or Conference

Instead of filing an Answer, Respondent may choose to pay the total amount of the proposed penalty within 30 days after receipt of the Complaint, provided that Respondent files with the Regional Hearing Clerk, Region 2 (at the address noted above), a copy of the check or other instrument of payment. 40 C.F.R. §22.18(a). A copy of the check or other instrument of payment should be provided to the EPA Assistant Regional Counsel identified on the previous page. Payment of the penalty assessed should be made by sending a cashier's or certified check payable to the "Treasurer, United States of America", in the full amount of the penalty assessed in this Complaint to the following addressee:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Fines and Penalties
Cincinnati Finance Center
PO Box 979077
St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §22.18(a)(3), if Respondent elects to pay the full amount of the penalty proposed in the Complaint within thirty (30) days of receiving the Complaint, then, upon EPA's receipt of such payment, the Regional Administrator of EPA, Region 2 (or, if designated, the Regional Judicial Officer), shall issue a Final Order in accordance with 40 C.F.R.

§22.18(a)(3). In accordance with 40 C.F.R. §22.45(c)(3), no Final Order shall issue until at least ten (10) days after the close of the comment period on this Complaint. Issuance of a Final Order terminates this administrative litigation and the civil proceedings arising out of the allegations made in the Complaint. Further, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §22.18(a)(3), the making of such payment by Respondent shall constitute a waiver of Respondent's right both to contest the allegations made in the Complaint and to appeal said Final Order to federal court. Such payment does not extinguish, waive, satisfy or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation and responsibility to comply with all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and to maintain such compliance.

VII. Filing of Documents

1. The Answer and any Hearing Request and all subsequent documents filed in this action should be sent to:

Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
290 Broadway - 16th Floor
New York, New York 10007-1866

17. A copy of the Answer, any Hearing Request and all subsequent documents filed in this action shall be sent to:

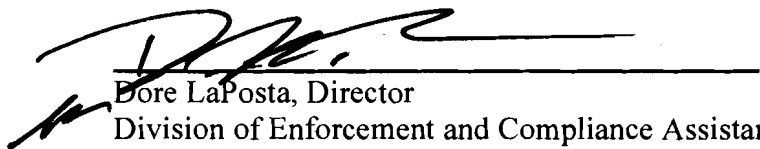
Diane Gomes, Esq.,
Assistant Regional Counsel
Office of Regional Counsel
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2
290 Broadway, 16th floor
New York, New York 10007-1866
(212) 637-3235

VIII. General Provisions

1. Respondent has a right to be represented by an attorney at any stage of these proceedings.
2. This Complaint does not constitute a waiver, suspension or modification of the requirements of the Act, regulations promulgated thereunder, or any applicable permit.

3. Neither assessment nor payment of an administrative civil penalty pursuant to Section 1414(g)(3)(B) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. §300g-3(g)(3)(B), will affect Respondent's continuing obligation to comply with the Act, and with regulations promulgated thereunder.

ISSUED THIS 21st DAY OF June 2009.


Dore LaPosta, Director
Division of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance
United States Environmental Protection Agency – Region 2
290 Broadway
New York, New York 10007-1866

To: Jose F. Ortiz Vázquez, Executive President
Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority
604 Barbosa Avenue
Hato Rey, PR 00917

UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2

IN THE MATTER OF:

Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer
Authority ("PRASA")
Anones Public Water System
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico 00917
PWS ID No. PR0005527

Respondent

Proceeding Pursuant to §1414(g)(3)(B)
of the Safe Drinking Water Act, 42
U.S.C. §300g-3(g)(3)(B)

Proceeding to Assess Civil
Penalty Under Section 1414(g)(3)(B)
of the
Safe Drinking Water Act

Docket No.
SDWA-02-2009-8405

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that, on the date noted below, I caused to be mailed, by certified mail, return receipt requested, a copy of the foregoing "ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLAINT" and a copy of the "Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties," (40 C.F.R. Part 22) to the following person at the address listed below:

Jose F. Ortiz Vázquez, Executive President
Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority
604 Barbosa Avenue
Hato Rey, PR 00917

I sent by inter-office mail the original and a copy of the foregoing Complaint to the office of the Regional Hearing Clerk, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 2.

Date: 6/29/09

Marie St. Germon

New York, New York