

UNITED STATES  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 2

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION AGENCY-REG.11  
2009 JUN 30 PM 4: 34  
REGIONAL HEARINGS  
CLERK

IN THE MATTER OF:

Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority  
("PRASA")  
Maricao 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 Penalties  
Under Section 1414(g)(3)(B) of the  
Safe Drinking Water Act

Docket No.  
SDWA-02-2009-8404

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 Maricao Public Water System ("PWS"), located in Maricao, Puerto Rico.

## II. Findings of Violation

1. Respondent owns and operates the Maricao “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 Maricao, 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 Maricao PWS is supplied by a surface water source, 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 Maricao 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 or 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 Maricao 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. §141.560, PWSs that provide conventional or direct filtration treatment and serve fewer than 10,000 people are required to conduct continuous monitoring of turbidity for each individual filter using an approved method in accordance

with §141.74(a), and record the results of individual filter monitoring every 15 minutes. Whereas, PWSs consisting of 2 or fewer filters, may conduct continuous monitoring of combined filter effluent turbidity in lieu of individual filter effluent turbidity monitoring and record the results of combined filter effluent turbidity every 15 minutes. PWSs are required to comply with the reporting and recordkeeping requirements of 40 C.F.R. §§141.570 and 141.571.

9. The Respondent's Maricao 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. On June 22, 2005, EPA issued a Section 1445 letter requesting information on the number of filters at each PWS serving less than 10,000 people to determine if individual filter requirements were applicable. Based on the information provided by the Respondent in its July 28, 2005, letter, EPA determined that the Maricao system was required to comply with the individual filter effluent turbidity monitoring requirements.
11. On August 17, 2005, EPA issued a Section 1445 letter, requesting information on the Respondent's compliance status regarding the installation and operation of turbidimeters for individual filters at the Maricao PWS. Based on Respondent's response, dated September 15, 2005, the Maricao PWS failed to comply with the requirements of the LT1ESWTR.
12. On September 30, 2005, EPA issue an AO, Docket No. SDWA-02-2005-8191 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 Maricao PWS to comply with the individual filter turbidity monitoring requirements by December 30, 2005. A copy of the AO is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.
13. Respondent has failed to comply with the individual filter turbidity monitoring, the reporting and recordkeeping requirements, in violation of the LT1ESWTR and the SDWA.

#### COUNT 1

14. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §141.560, PWSs that provide conventional or direct filtration treatment and have 3 or more filters, are required to conduct turbidity monitoring for each individual filter using an approved method and to record the results every 15 minutes. PWSs are required to comply with the reporting and recordkeeping requirements of 40 C.F.R. §§141.570 and 141.571.
15. Paragraph 12 of the AO requires Respondent to install and operate continuous monitoring turbidimeters for each individual filter and record the results of individual filter monitoring every 15 minutes. Thereafter, Respondent shall remain in compliance with the reporting and recordkeeping requirements set forth in C.F.R. §§141.570 and 141.571.

16. Respondent failed to demonstrate compliance with the individual filter turbidity monitoring and the reporting and recordkeeping requirements specified in 40 C.F.R. §§141.560, 141.570 and 141.571.
17. Respondent, has failed, therefore, to demonstrate compliance with the requirements specified in 40 C.F.R. §§151.560, 141.570 and 141.571 and Paragraph 12 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 **Nineteen Thousand Dollars (\$19,000.00)**. 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 25<sup>th</sup> DAY OF June 2009.

  
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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")  
Maricao Public Water System  
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico 00917  
PWS ID No. PR0003353

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-02-2009-8404

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. Germain*

New York, New York