



UNITED STATES  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATOR

In the Matter of: )  
 )  
The GEO Group, Inc., ) Docket No. FIFRA-09-2024-0066  
 )  
Respondent. )

**ORDER GRANTING JOINT MOTION FOR APPOINTMENT OF A NEUTRAL**

This proceeding was initiated on June 3, 2024, when Complainant, the Manager of the Toxics Section in the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division of Region 9 of the of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, filed a Complaint and Notice of Opportunity to Request a Hearing against Respondent The GEO Group, Inc., for alleged violations of Section 12 of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, as amended (“FIFRA”), 7 U.S.C. § 136(j). After Respondent filed an Answer to Complaint and Request for Hearing on July 22, 2024, the matter was forwarded to this Tribunal for adjudication, and I was designated to preside.

By Prehearing Order and Corrected Prehearing Order dated August 6, 2024, I set deadlines for certain prehearing procedures, including a prehearing exchange of information by the parties and the filing of certain prehearing motions. Pursuant to the Prehearing Order, the parties filed their prehearing exchanges. Complainant filed a Rebuttal Prehearing Exchange on October 25, 2024.

Now before me is the parties’ Joint Motion for Appointment of a Neutral (“Joint Motion”), which was timely filed on October 31, 2024. Therein, the parties jointly move for the appointment of a neutral in the above-referenced matter to facilitate voluntary settlement negotiations pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(d)(3). The parties wish to continue to engage in settlement discussions and believe that these discussions will benefit from the appointment of a neutral. The matter is in a relatively early stage and has not yet been scheduled for hearing.

This proceeding is governed by the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits (“Consolidated Rules of Practice” or “Rules”), set forth at 40 C.F.R. Part 22. The Rules of Practice provide the parties may move for the appointment of a neutral as part of an alternative means of dispute resolution and that if such motion is granted, “the Presiding Officer shall forward the motion to the Chief Administrative Law Judge,” who will then “designate a qualified neutral.” 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(d)(3).

Upon consideration, I find that the parties' request for the appointment of a neutral is reasonable. Accordingly, their Joint Motion is **GRANTED**. I will transfer this case to Chief Administrative Law Judge Susan L. Biro for assignment of a neutral to preside over the alternative dispute resolution process.

**SO ORDERED.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wright', written over a horizontal line.

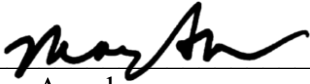
Michael B. Wright  
Administrative Law Judge

Dated: November 13, 2024  
Washington, D.C.

In the NOAA Matter of *The GEO Group, Inc.*, Respondent.  
Docket No. FIFRA-09-2024-0066

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that the foregoing **Order Granting Motion for Appointment of a Neutral**, dated November 13, 2024, and issued by Administrative Law Michael B. Wright, was sent this day to the following parties in the manner indicated below.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Angeles  
Paralegal Specialist

Original by OALJ E-Filing System to:  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Office of Administrative Law Judges  
[https://yosemite.epa.gov/OA/EAB/EAB-ALJ\\_Upload.nsf](https://yosemite.epa.gov/OA/EAB/EAB-ALJ_Upload.nsf)

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*For Respondent*

Dated: November 13, 2024  
Washington, D.C.