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BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION APPEALS BOARD UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY WASHINGTON, D.C.

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In re:

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DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY : RCRA Appeal No. 06-01

HANGING ROCK PLANT,

:

Permit No. OHD039-128-913 :

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Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, August 12, 2008

The above-entitled matter came on for TELECONFERENCE at approximately 11:00 a.m. at 1140 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C.

BEFORE:

CHARLES SHEEHAN

Presiding Judge

NIVEA BERRIOS

Senior Counsel to the Board

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1	APPEARANCES:	1	I outlined a few questions in that
2	On behalf of PPG Industries Ohio, Inc.:	2	order. Maybe turn right to those first,
3	ROBERT J. SCHMIDT, ESQUIRE	3	asking Mr. Chow to go to respond
4	Porter Wright Morris & Arthur 41 South High Street	4	initially. First, why does Ohio have to get
	Columbus, Ohio 43215	5	involved in the certification at this point,
5	(614) 227-2028	6	if you've already represented that Ohio,
6 7	On behalf of Environmental Protection Agency: KEVIN C. CHOW, ESQUIRE	7	contrary to what you said earlier, is no
′	Office of General Counsel	8	longer going to be involved as the permitting
8	U.S. EPA Region 5	9	
	77 West Jackson Boulevard	1	authority? What role do they play at this
9	Chicago, Illinois 60604 (312) 886-0562	10	point if they're no longer involved in the
10	(312) 880-0302	11	permit?
	ALSO PRESENT:	12	MR. CHOW: I guess what you've got to
11		13	understand is that the actually, the parties
12	Eurika Durr Mark Mahoney	14	were on this kind of simultaneous track for
13	* * * * *	15	terminating the appeal. One was the comparable
14		16	fuels demonstration that I was proceeding with.
15		17	The other possibility was you know, now that
16 17	•	18	Ohio has been authorized to issue BIF permits,
18		19	to actually issue a BIF permit, making EPA's
19		20	permit unnecessary.
20 21		21	So a few months ago, I guess, when
$\begin{vmatrix} 21\\22\end{vmatrix}$		22	this all came up as possibilities nobody
	3		5
1	PROCEEDINGS	1	knew which one would proceed faster, so we
2	MS. DURR: The Environmental Appeals	2	decided, well, let's request the AB to for
3	Board of the United States Environmental	3	more time to let both of them proceed.
4	Protection Agency is now in session for a	4	But as Dow proceeded with the
5	teleconference in re: the Dow Chemical Company	5	comparable fuels demonstration, and as Ohio
6	Hanging Rock Plant, Permit No. OHD039-128-913;	6	EPA started to draft up and review a state
7	RCRA Appeal No. 06-01, the Honorable Judge	7	BIF permit, I think Dow determined that it
8	Charles Sheehan presiding.	8	was making such good progress with its
9	JUDGE SHEEHAN: Good morning. This is	9	comparable fuels demonstration, with Ohio
10	Judge Sheehan, and with me is Nivea Berrios, our	10	EPA's review on participation, that Ohio
11	senior attorney on the case.	11	decided that, since the comparable fuels
12	As the order of August 6 indicates,	12	demonstration would be the most likely thing
13	I'd like to talk with you all today about the	13	to occur, that it would not be appropriate
14	timing here. I begin with the shall we	14	use of their resources to issue a state
15	say discomfort with the fact that this case	15	permit which would then be rendered moot
16	has gone on over 2 years now, it's look like	16	because of the comparable fuels
17	it's heading into at least 2-1/2 years at	17	demonstration.
18	this point.	18	My understanding is that the
19	So I'd like to understand why the	19	comparable fuels demonstration was just going
20	delay, and whether or not we need to get on	20	to proceed anyway as a result of the joint
21	•	1	
22	with briefing this case and having oral argument.	21 22	venture between Dow and Chevron. That's just a business decision that they made. So Ohio
	aronmeni	1 77	a pusiness decision that they made. So Unio

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- just told us maybe a month ago that they werenot going to be issuing a state-issued
- 3 permit. So that's kind of the -- that's the
- 4 reason why they're not issuing a state BIF
- 5 permit.

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JUDGE SHEEHAN: I think I get that, but I don't understand why if they're not issuing the permit they need to issue the clean closure certification.

10 MR. CHOW: That's a result of the 11 comparable fuels demonstration. Once -- my

- 12 understanding of the process is -- and Rob can
- 13 properly explain this a little bit more than I
- 14 can -- that once the comparable fuels
- 15 demonstration is made and Dow conducts its clean
- 16 closure on a couple of units, that Dow would be
- 17 preparing a report, mailing it to Ohio, and then
- 18 Ohio would be reviewing it and -- you know,
- 19 accepting or rejecting the results of this
- 20 report.

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- And that's the clean closure
- 22 certification that would give Dow the

- 1 building in a little extra time, we decided
- 2 that November 21st would be an appropriate
- 3 time.

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- 4 MR. SCHMIDT: I think --
 - JUDGE SHEEHAN: So --
- 6 MR. SCHMIDT: I'm sorry.
- 7 JUDGE SHEEHAN: Is that Mr. Schmidt?
- 8 MR. SCHMIDT: Yes, Your Honor. I
- 9 wanted to offer another point on this, and that
- 10 is -- due to the uncertainty with Ohio EPA, when
- 11 Kevin and I were discussing the timeline, that
- 12 is when we discussed alternatives to a permanent
- 13 modification at the federal level, and
- 14 terminating this appeal before going through
- 15 that process.

We're faced with Ohio EPA having

- 17 final say on the closure of the unit, both
- 18 because of delegations and because of the
- 19 comparable fuels demonstration that's
- 20 currently being made.
- 21 But once we get that certification
- 22 of clean closure from Ohio EPA -- and I will

1 certainty and closure that it needs to

- make -- to have a successful comparable fuels
- 3 demonstration.

JUDGE SHEEHAN: Given the slow pace in this case at this point, it sounds like that's a

this case at this point, it sounds like that's arecipe for multiple months more time; right?

7 MR. CHOW: We've talked to Ohio EPA 8 about exactly how long it would take for them to

- 9 review these clean closure reports, and they
- 10 could not give us a specific timeline or a
- particular date, but I think the Ohio EPA staffmembers said, maybe it'll take us a couple of
- 13 weeks. But they could not commit it to any
- 14 particular time frame.

15 That's kind of the -- that's the

- source of some uncertainty on our part as
 to -- I mean, Rob and I were trying to figure
- 18 out how much time should we ask. We have no
- 19 idea how long Ohio EPA will take other than
- 20 Ohio -- a low-level Ohio EPA staffer said,
- 21 well, maybe it'll take us a couple of weeks.
- 22 So taking them at their word, and

- 1 also convey that I have relayed to Ohio EPA's
- 2 legal counsel that this is a decision that
- 3 needs to be made in short order because of
- 4 this appeal and because of trying to resolve
- 5 federal permitting issues. He understood
- 6 that and did commit to making his best7 efforts to resolve or to ensure the closure
 - certification.

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I guess what we were talking about,

- 10 Kevin and I, was the possibility of finding a
- way to resolve this appeal after closure was certified by Ohio EPA but before we go
- 13 through the modification process at the
- 14 federal level to remove the BIF permit
 - conditions.

I think that's something that I've convinced my client is the most appropriate thing to do rather than wait for a permanent

thing to do rather than wait formodification to go through.

20 So we've tried our best to reduce 21 the timeline for concluding this appeal,

taking into account the uncertainty presented

- by Ohio EPA's decision-making process -- by
- 2 reaching an agreement that we will withdraw
- 3 this appeal as soon as that certification is
- 4 confirmed, and as soon as the agency confirms
- 5 that it does not consider us subject to the
- 6 BIF permit anymore, and then we will wrap up
- 7 the permanent modification that is necessary
- 8 to remove the BIF permit after we withdraw
- 9 the appeal.

And that was our best effort to try
and reduce the timeline, understanding that

12 everybody wants to get this matter resolved.13 JUDGE SHEEHAN: So you'd withdraw the

14 appeal when the certification is approved, but

15 when the certification is approved is anyone's

16 guess.

17 MR. SCHMIDT: I guess I would say it's

18 not a question of multiple, multiple months, but

19 Ohio EPA didn't want to give us a definitive

demonstration to Ohio?

- 20 answer on how long it would take them to review
- 21 the closure.

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22 JUDGE SHEEHAN: When are you going to

let's see, we've completed -- to give you a

in a tank and then sent to the boiler for

the comparable fuels demonstration.

there are three things that we have to

unit. The second item is the tank. It's

called the R-35 tank. It's a mixing tank

basically for the two products -- or the

cleaned within the next two weeks.

quick thumbnail overview -- the boiler that was

subject to the RCRA permit in this case has two

product lines that generate waste that are mixed

burning. One of the process lines has already

That line, we could -- essentially

certify as clean for purposes of closing this

waste from the two product lines. That tank

We have to get a temporary tank on site to allow us to accumulate any materials

is scheduled to be taken out of service and

been cleaned and tested and sampled and meets

MR. SCHMIDT: We are working -- well,

- 1 from that tank -- sludge and other materials,
- 2 as well as allowing us to continue to work on
- 3 the second product line.

4 The second product line has already

5 been cleaned. We cannot properly test it

6 yet. We should have that testing done in

7 September for -- to allow us to submit to8 Ohio EPA by the end of September the closure

9 certification request. That's the timeline.

10 So within the next -- assuming

11 nothing goes wrong with the testing of

12 sampling, that indicates we have a problem

13 with the -- that we need to more cleaning for

14 closure, within the next six to eight weeks,

15 Ohio EPA should have that information.

16 JUDGE SHEEHAN: And then begins the

17 uncertain period?

MR. SCHMIDT: Correct. That begins

19 the uncertainty associated with their review,

20 but again, if we get the certification reports

21 to them by the end of September, perhaps early

22 October, we would -- again, this is a -- Kevin

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get the final information on the fuel

1 and I were looking at the possibility of them

2 taking anywhere from four to six weeks to

3 review.

4 If they certify it within that

5 period of time, I'm assuming the region would

6 be able to provide us with notification that

7 they no longer consider us subject to the BIF

8 portions of the permit, and we can at that

9 point withdraw the appeal. So again, that's

10 why the November 21st date that we proposed

was kind of how we reached the timeline for

resolving this matter.

JUDGE SHEEHAN: By the way, I'll ask

14 Ms. Berrios to jump in here if she has any

15 questions. I should have said that at the

16 outset.

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17 MR. CHOW: Judge, the letter that EPA

18 is writing, it's more of a -- I characterize it

19 more as a comfort letter than anything. I think

20 Dow just wanted some assurances that EPA would

21 consider the appeal and the permit, at least of

their portions to be moved after the clean

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4 (Pages 10 to 13)

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closure certification. EPA is agreeable to doing that. And that is not a difficult letter to write.

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doing that --

4 JUDGE SHEEHAN: Okay. But getting 5 back to Ohio for a moment, I am not 6 understanding why it is that at this point, with 7 a lot of energy invested into this case and with 8 the permit issues, you're still unable to get 9 any better guarantee from Ohio about their 10 timeline than some -- as you put it -- a 11 "low-level staffer."

Why can't you get somebody at a management level to commit for Ohio -- we'll turn it around within two weeks or something like that rather than just go into this uncertain cloudy mode of a low-level person giving you a vague representation and you've got nothing better than that.

19 Why can't you get higher-level 20 people in the state to give you more comfort 21 than that?

22 MR. CHOW: I suppose we could talk to

some managers over there and see if there's any

way they can maybe clear the schedules of their

MR. SCHMIDT: Your Honor, I will offer

staffers or something, but yeah, we could try

1 they're going to want to leave themselves

2 wiggle-room in case somebody is unable to

3 reach a decision within that period of time.

4 I want to try.

MR. CHOW: I know. I'm certainly

6 willing to. 7 JUDGE SHEEHAN: I understand that they

8 probably can't certify absolutely that they can 9 turn it around in X number of days or weeks, but

10 it is troubling that you're going on a low-level

11 person's date representations at a time 2-1/2

12 years down the pike when this case should have

been done by now, much less being it another 13

14 sort of beginning stage or another cycle here.

15 It's not very reassuring to think you're still 16 not getting much out of Ohio, or not even

17 getting any kind of higher-level commitment to 18

try. 19

MR. SCHMIDT: I would -- this is Rob Schmidt again -- I can certainly commit to

21 making an effort to get higher-level managers at

22 Ohio EPA to try to move this as expeditiously as

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possible. I will certainly do that.

MR. CHOW: EPA will make contact as

3 well. 4 JUDGE SHEEHAN: Mr. Chow, would you

5 have any objection if this was not wrapped up in

6 the sense of the appeal being withdrawn

7 by -- say the November 21st date that I think is

8 now on the table -- that Region V be directed to 9

file its brief?

MR. CHOW: Yeah, probably. I mean, if we file the brief and then Dow was on the verge of finishing its comparable fuels demonstration

and submitting its clean closure reports and 13

then two or three -- whatever -- how many weeks 14

15 later, Ohio EPA certifies the closure, then all that work would have been for naught. 16

17 JUDGE SHEEHAN: Right. I understand

18 that, except that on looking at the laundry list 19 here, request for more time, beginning in '06,

20 and every time it looks like positive statements

21 were made about being near agreement in

principle, agreement in principle on all issues,

an observation based on practicing in Ohio for the last decade or so -- we can try that and certainly a request from U.S. EPA to Ohio EPA for assistance in making sure that this is a 10 high priority for the people that need to make the decision will certainly be something that 12 Ohio EPA will listen to. 13 I have in my experience not found 14 them willing to set deadlines for themselves 15 in any matter. I would think a joint request 16 would be something that they will look

17 favorably on, but I would -- in my 18 experience, it's unlikely that we would get 19 an actual definitive statement that they will

20 take action by a certain date. 21 I would hope that they would give

22 that to the Region V, but in my experience,

5 (Pages 14 to 17)

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- 1 think we can wrap this up by September 21st. 2 And each time, the good news is offset by more 3 bad news. So there's a certain amount of 4 skepticism here that I'm sure you can 5 appreciate.
- 6 MR. CHOW: Sure. I do appreciate 7 that. And it's just -- I don't know if I 8 would characterize this case as being cursed, 9 but it just seems like we were on the verge of 10 something and then something happens along the 11 way. But at this time, I just do really feel 12 that we're at the end of the line here. I personally can't imagine something that would 14 occur that would prevent the comparable fuels 15 demonstrations from being accepted at some
- 16 point. 17 But I've been wrong before, so I 18 can't say with certainty that this will be
- 19 the last time. All I can say is that it

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- 20 would just be -- I think -- it would just be 21 an inappropriate use of my time and the
- 22 government resources to file the brief on

1 explain to them the reason we have to do this

- is because we just haven't been able to
- 3 terminate this.

4 So it would get -- unless I get

5 some management approval of this thing, it

6 would get shoved down to the bottom of their 7 priority list.

I can see the point, but I don't think it would be a good thing to do right 10 now.

11 JUDGE SHEEHAN: It sounds like you 12 appreciate, though, from the board's point of 13 view, our job is to move cases, and this case 14 has done nothing but sit for well over two 15 years. It's one of our oldest cases. And if 16 somebody were looking at our docket, they would 17 certainly wonder why in the world we had given 18 so many extensions for so little fruit.

19 MR. CHOW: My job is to move cases, 20 too, and I have been concerned about -- but I 21 understand your point of view completely. I 22 should say I think at this point -- I think we

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every single item that Dow has appealed. And these are highly technical issues, too.

I mean, we spent a lot of time trying to get all of our experts together just going through these things in minute detail and running models and calculations and gathering more information. So to have to go back into that when the case is just about over -- that's just a formality of trying to terminate the permit or -- I would prefer not to have to file the brief.

12 I mean, I can understand why, 13 filing the brief would at least -- would 14 preclude these constant requests for 15 additional time. But I -- at this time, I

16 don't think that would be appropriate use of

17 EPA resources, because I would have to gather

- 18 back my experts and my staff people and our
- 19 experts -- we've had an awful time trying to 20 get them scheduled to meet with us. They are
- 21 so busy, and their expertise is so much in
- 22. demand that -- and then I would have to

really, really are the end. A few more months I

think really will do it. Everything seems -- I

3 think we have a plan and we have a timeline 4 that'll be subject to Ohio EPA's uncertainties

as far as getting its review done.

6 JUDGE SHEEHAN: Let me ask this: what 7 degree of probability do you both feel -- you 8 can each speak independently if you wish -- to

9 the prospect that this appeal would be withdrawn 10 by November 21st?

Mr. Chow, what's your --

12 MR. CHOW: I have 95 percent certainty 13 on that.

14 JUDGE SHEEHAN: What about you, 15 Mr. Schmidt?

16 MR. SCHMIDT: Not quite 95 percent, 17 but I would say that if I needed to put a number on it, I'd say 80 to 90 percent. And that's 18 19 just -- I mean, there are a couple of moving 20 pieces that we don't have control over. But

21 those moving pieces I think we can put pressure 22

on to get the review done. And the -- frankly,

6 (Pages 18 to 21)

'	about our chorts to move that forward and
8	thus, I think we will get their cooperation
9	in terms of moving this thing to final
10	closure.
11	JUDGE SHEEHAN: I'll ask Ms. Berrios
12	if she has any questions.
13	MS. BERRIOS: I just have a
14	(inaudible) make sure that I understood
15	correctly, will Dow then withdraw the petition
16	after it receives a formal acknowledgement from
17	the region that they're no longer subject to the
18	BIF portion of the permit? And then after that,
19	we'll proceed with permanent modification?
20	MR. SCHMIDT: That's correct.
21	MS. BERRIOS: Okay. Thank you.
22	JUDGE SHEEHAN: I'll conclude then by

JUDGE SHEEHAN: Thanks very much. 14 (Whereupon, at approximately 15 11:24 a.m., the HEARING was 16 adjourned.) 17 18 19 20 21 22

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