

UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6

FILED

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REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
EPA REGION VI

In the Matter of:

DeSoto Holdings, LP

Respondent.

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DOCKET NO. CWA-06-2009-2752

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This Consent Agreement and Final Order (CAFO) is issued under the authority vested in the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pursuant to Section 309(g) of the Clean Water Act (herein the Act), 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g). This CAFO is issued to simultaneously commence and conclude this proceeding to assess a Class I civil penalty in accordance with 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) and (3), as described in the "Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits."

2. The Parties agree that settlement of the relevant matters without litigation will save time and resources, that it is in the public's interest, and that the entry of this CAFO is the most appropriate means of resolving such matters. Compliance with all the terms and conditions of this CAFO resolves only those violations alleged herein.

3. Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations herein for this proceeding only; however, Respondent neither admits nor denies the specific Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law contained in this CAFO.

4. This CAFO states a claim(s) upon which relief may be granted.

5. Respondent expressly waives any right to contest the factual allegations or Conclusions of Law contained in this CAFO for purposes of this proceeding, and waives its right to appeal the Final Order set forth herein

6. Before the taking of any testimony and without adjudication of any issue of law or fact, the parties agree to the terms of this CAFO and to its issuance. Respondent consents to the assessment and payment of a civil penalty in the amount and by the method stated below.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

7. DeSoto Holdings, LP, (Respondent) is a limited partnership which was incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas, is registered in the State of Louisiana, and as such, Respondent is a "person," as that term is defined at Section 502(5) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(5), and 40 C.F.R. §§ 122.2 and 232.2.

8. At all times relevant to the violations alleged herein (relevant time period), Respondent owned real property (herein the Property), located at Section 4, Township 14 North, Range 13 West (Lat 32.2374 Long -93.7006), adjacent and west of LA Highway 175, near Frierson Branch, in DeSoto Parish, Louisiana.

9. On multiple dates beginning on July 10, 2009, and ending on August 17, 2009, Respondent carried out construction activities at the proposed oil/gas supply yard location.

10. On multiple dates between July 10, 2009 and August 17, 2009, Respondent discharged, caused the discharge, directed the discharge, and/or agreed with other persons or business entities, to "discharge dredged material" and/or "discharge fill material," as defined by Section 502 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362, and 40 C.F.R. § 232.2 from point sources, including heavy equipment, in, on and to approximately five and two tenths (5.2) acres of wetlands within the subject property. This work was associated with the potential development of a commercial business to supply services to the local oil/gas industry, and was done without authorization under a permit issued by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

11. During the relevant time period, the 5.2 acres of wetlands referred to in paragraph 10, *supra*, were regulated as "navigable waters" as defined by Section 502(7) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(7), and 40 C.F.R. § 232.2.

12. The discharged dredged material and fill material are considered "pollutants" as that term is defined at Section 502(6) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(6).

13. Each piece of equipment used for the discharge(s) acted as a "point source" as that term is defined at Section 502(14) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(14).

14. Under Section 301(a) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), it is unlawful for any person to discharge a pollutant from a point source to waters of the United States, except with the authorization of, and in compliance with, a permit issued under the Act.

15. Under Section 404 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1344, the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers for the Corps, is authorized to issue permits for the discharge of dredged or fill material into navigable waters of the United States.

16. At no time during the relevant time period did Respondent have a permit issued by the Corps authorizing the discharges alleged herein.

17. Under Section 309(g)(1)(A) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(1)(A), the Administrator is authorized to assess a Class I or Class II civil penalty whenever, on the basis of any available information, the Administrator finds that a person has violated Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311.

18. Each day of unauthorized discharge by Respondent is a violation of Section 301(a) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a).

19. Under Section 309(g)(2)(A) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(2)(A), Respondent is liable for a civil penalty in an amount not to exceed \$16,000 per day for each day on which a violation continues, up to a maximum \$37,500.

20. The State of Louisiana was notified and given an opportunity to consult with EPA regarding the proposed assessment of an administrative penalty against Respondent.

21. EPA notified the public of the proposed CAFO and afforded the public forty (40) days to comment on the proposed penalty in accordance with 40 C.F.R. §22.45.

III. TERMS OF SETTLEMENT

A. PENALTY PROVISIONS

22. Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, EPA Region 6, considering the relevant criteria pursuant to Section 309(g)(3) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(3), and acting pursuant to the authority of Section 309(g) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g), hereby orders that Respondent shall pay a civil penalty in the amount of Thirty Seven Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$37,500.00) to the United States to settle this matter for violations as alleged in this CAFO, in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c).

23. Payment shall be made by one of the following methods within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this CAFO:

- a. By mailing a bank check, a cashier's check or certified check, payable to "Treasurer of the United States," to:

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

- b. By wire transfer to:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York
ABA = 021030004
Account = 68010727
SWIFT Address = FRNYUS33
33 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10045
Field Tag 4200 of the Fedwire message should read:
"D 68010727 Environmental Protection Agency"

- c. By overnight mail (Express, FedEx, DHL, etc.) to:

U.S. Bank
1005 Convention Plaza
SL-MO-C2-GL
St. Louis, MO 63101
Phone: 314-418-4087

- d. By credit card payments to <https://www.pay.gov/paygov/>
(enter sfo 1.1 in the search field)

When paying by check, the case name and docket number (In the Matter of DeSoto Holdings, LP, Select Energy Field Yard, Docket No. CWA-06-2009-2752) should be marked clearly on the check to ensure credit for payment.

24. Respondent shall send simultaneous notice of payment, including a copy of the check or other proof of payment, to each of the following:

- (a) Lorena Vaughn
Regional Hearing Clerk (6RC-D)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
- (b) Jeanene Peckham
Enforcement Officer (6WQ-EM)
Water Quality Protection Division
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
- (c) Agustin F. Carbo
Assistant Regional Counsel (6RC-M)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Respondent's adherence to these procedures will ensure proper credit when payment is received by EPA.

25. Respondent agrees not to claim, or attempt to claim, a federal income tax deduction or credit covering all or any part of the civil penalty paid to the United States Treasurer.

26. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717 and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11, unless otherwise prohibited by law, EPA will assess interest and late payment penalties on outstanding debts owed to the United States and a charge to cover the costs of processing and handling a delinquent claim. Interest on the civil penalty assessed in this CAFO will begin to accrue thirty (30) days after the effective date of the CAFO and will be recovered by EPA on any amount of the civil penalty that is not paid by the respective due date. Interest will be assessed at the rate of the United States Treasury

tax and loan rate in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(a). Moreover, the costs of the Agency's administrative handling of overdue debts will be charged and assessed monthly throughout the period the debt is overdue. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(b).

27. EPA will also assess a \$15.00 administrative handling charge for administrative costs on unpaid penalties for the first thirty (30) day period after the payment is due and an additional \$15.00 for each subsequent thirty (30) day period that the penalty remains unpaid. In addition, a penalty charge of up to six percent per year will be assessed monthly on any portion of the debt which remains delinquent more than ninety (90) days. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(c). Should a penalty charge on the debt be required, it shall accrue from the first day payment is delinquent. *See* 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(d). Other penalties for failure to make a payment may also apply.

28. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(9) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(9), any person who fails to pay on a timely basis a civil penalty ordered or assessed under this section shall be required to pay, in addition to such penalty and interest, the United States' enforcement expenses, including but not limited to, attorneys' fees and costs incurred by the United States for collection proceedings and a quarterly nonpayment penalty for each quarter during which such failure to pay persists. Such nonpayment penalty shall be twenty (20) percent of the aggregate amount of such person's outstanding penalties and nonpayment penalties accrued as of the beginning of each quarter.

29. Failure by Respondent to pay the penalty assessed according to the terms of this CAFO, in full, by its due date, may subject Respondent to a civil action to collect the assessed penalty and any accrued interest and penalties.

30. In the event a collection action is necessary, Respondent shall pay - in addition to any applicable penalty, fees, and interest described herein - all reasonable costs and expenses, including legal expenses and court costs, incurred by the United States for enforcement and collection proceedings for nonpayment of the amounts agreed hereunder, pursuant to Section 309(g)(9) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. 1319(g)(9). In any such collection action, the validity, amount, and appropriateness of the penalty, and the terms of this CAFO, shall not be subject to review.

B. GENERAL PROVISIONS

31. This CAFO shall become effective upon filing with EPA's Regional Hearing Clerk.

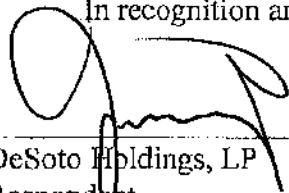
32. Issuance of this CAFO does not relieve Respondent from responsibility to comply with all requirements of the Act and the requirements of any permits issued thereunder, as described in Section 309(g)(7) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(7), nor does it constitute a waiver by EPA of its right to enforce compliance with the requirements of Respondent's permits or other requirements of the Act by actions pursuant to Section 309 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319.

33. The provisions of this CAFO shall be binding upon Respondent, its officers or officials, managers, employees, and their successors or assigns, in their capacity on behalf of Respondent.


34. Each party agrees to bear its own costs and attorneys fees in this matter, except to the extent that Respondent may be responsible for reasonable costs and expenses of enforcement and collection proceedings for failure to comply with the terms of this CAFO. Furthermore, Respondent specifically waives its right to seek reimbursement of its costs and attorney's fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act (5 U.S.C. § 504), as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, 5 U.S.C. §§ 601-612, and any regulations promulgated pursuant to those Acts.

35. Each undersigned representative of the parties to this agreement certifies that he or she is fully authorized by the party represented to enter into the terms and conditions of this agreement and to execute and legally bind that party to it.

In recognition and acceptance of the foregoing:


DeSoto Holdings, LP
Respondent

4 January 10
Date

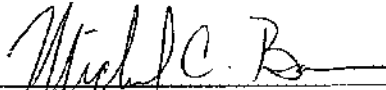

Miguel I. Flores, Director
Water Quality Protection Division
Complainant

11/1/10
Date

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, the foregoing Consent Agreement is hereby ratified. This Final Order shall not in any case affect the right of EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law. This Final Order shall resolve only those causes of action alleged in the Complaint. Nothing in this Final Order shall be construed to waive, extinguish or otherwise affect Respondent's (or its officers, agents, servants, employees, successors, or assigns) obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, including the regulations that were the subject of this action. Respondent is ordered to comply with the terms of settlement and the civil penalty payment instructions as set forth in the Consent Agreement. This CAFO shall become effective upon filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b).

Issuance Date: January 14, 2010



Regional Judicial Officer

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the 15th day of JANUARY, 2010 ~~2009~~, the original of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was hand delivered to the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. EPA, Region 6 (6RC-D), 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733, and that a true and correct copy was placed in the United States Mail, by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the following:

Mr. Paul O. Dicharry, Esq.
Counsel for DeSoto Holdings, LP
Taylor, Porter, Brooks & Phillips, LLP
P.O. Box 2471
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Copy hand-delivered:

Jeanene Peckham
Water Quality Protection Division (6WQ-EM)
U.S. EPA Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue
Dallas, TX 75202-2733