

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region 4

In the Matter of:

**Alabama Pellets, LLC,**

Respondent.

Docket No. **EPCRA-04-2021-0609(b)**

**CONSENT AGREEMENT**

**I. NATURE OF ACTION**

1. This is an administrative penalty assessment proceeding brought under Section 325 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11045 (EPCRA or the Act) and Sections 22.13(b) and 22.18 of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits (Consolidated Rules), as codified at Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), Part 22.
2. This Consent Agreement and the attached Final Order shall collectively be referred to as the CAFO.
3. Having found that settlement is consistent with the provisions and objectives of the Act and applicable regulations, the Parties have agreed to settle this action pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.18 and consent to the entry of this CAFO without adjudication of any issues of law or fact herein.

**II. PARTIES**

4. Complainant is Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division, United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, who has been delegated the authority on behalf of the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to enter into this CAFO pursuant to 40 C.F.R. Part 22 and Section 325 of the EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045.
5. Respondent is Alabama Pellets, LLC, a limited liability company doing business in the State of Alabama. This proceeding pertains to Respondent's facility located at 6777 Highway 17, Aliceville, Alabama 35442 (Facility).

### III. GOVERNING LAW

6. Section 313 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023, and 40 C.F.R. §§ 372.22 and 372.30, provide that the owner or operator of a facility that (a) has 10 or more full-time employees; (b) is in a Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) major group or industry listed in 40 C.F.R. § 372.23(a) for which the corresponding North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) subsector and industry codes are listed in 40 C.F.R. §§ 372.23(b) and 372.23(c); and (c) manufactured, processed, or otherwise used a toxic chemical listed in Section 313(c) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023(c), and 40 C.F.R. § 372.65, in excess of an applicable threshold quantity established under Section 313(f) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023(f) and set forth in 40 C.F.R. § 372.25, during the calendar year, shall complete and submit a toxic chemical release inventory reporting Form R (EPA Form 9350-1) to the Administrator of the EPA and to the State in which the facility is located, by July 1 for the preceding calendar year for each toxic chemical known by the owner or operator to be manufactured, processed, or otherwise used in quantities exceeding the established threshold quantity during the preceding calendar year.
7. “Full-time employee” means 2,000 hours per year of full-time equivalent employment. A facility calculates the number of full-time employees by totaling the hours worked during the calendar year by all employees, including contract employees, and dividing that total by 2,000 hours. 40 C.F.R. § 372.3.
8. As set forth in Section 313(f) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023(f), and 40 C.F.R. § 372.25, the reporting threshold amount for a toxic chemical manufactured or processed at a facility is 25,000 pounds per calendar year. The reporting threshold for a toxic chemical otherwise used at a facility is 10,000 pounds. Notwithstanding 40 C.F.R. § 372.25 or 40 C.F.R. § 372.27, lower reporting thresholds for chemicals of special concern are set forth in 40 C.F.R. § 372.28.
9. Lead is a toxic chemical listed under Section 313(c) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023(c), and 40 C.F.R. § 372.65 and a chemical of special concern under 40 C.F.R. § 372.28 with a reporting threshold of 100 pounds.
10. “Facility” means all buildings, equipment, structures, and other stationary items which are located on a single or on contiguous or adjacent sites and which are owned or operated by the same person (or by any person which controls, is controlled by, or under common control with, such person). Section 329(4) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(4). A facility may include more than one establishment. 40 C.F.R. § 372.3.
11. “Person” means any individual, trust, firm, joint stock company, corporation (including a government corporation), partnership, association, State, municipality, commission, political subdivision of a State, or interstate body. Section 329(7) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(7).
12. Pursuant to Section 325(c) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(c), and 40 C.F.R. Part 19, the EPA may assess a civil penalty for each violation of Section 313 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023. Civil penalties under Section 325(c) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(c), may be assessed by administrative order.

#### **IV. FINDINGS OF FACTS**

13. Respondent has 10 or more full-time employees, as defined at 40 C.F.R. § 372.3 at its Facility.
14. Respondent's Facility is classified under the covered NAICS code 321219, as described at 40 C.F.R. §372.22 and 40 C.F.R. §372.23.
15. Respondent's Facility processed or otherwise used lead in excess of the 100 pound threshold quantity for the chemical established under Section 313(f) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11023(f), and 40 C.F.R. § 372.28, during calendar year 2018.
16. Respondent failed to submit a Toxic Chemical Release Form/Form R for lead to EPA and to the State of Alabama for calendar year 2018 by July 1, 2019.

#### **V. ALLEGED VIOLATIONS**

17. Respondent is a "person" and is the owner and operator of the Facility which is a "facility," as those terms are defined in Section 329(7) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(7), and Section 329(4) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(4), during the relevant period described herein.
18. Respondent violated the reporting requirements of Section 313 of EPCRA by failing to submit the required Form R for lead for calendar year 2018 by July 1, 2019 and is therefore subject to the assessment of penalties under Section 325 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045.

#### **VI. STIPULATIONS**

19. The issuance of this CAFO simultaneously commences and concludes this proceeding. 40 C.F.R. § 22.13(b).
20. For the purpose of this proceeding, as required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2), Respondent:
  - (a) admits that EPA has jurisdiction over the subject matter alleged in this CAFO;
  - (b) neither admits nor denies the factual allegations set forth in Section IV (Findings of Facts) of this CAFO;
  - (c) consents to the assessment of a civil penalty as stated below;
  - (d) consents to the conditions specified in this CAFO;
  - (e) waives any right to contest the allegations set forth in Section (Alleged Violations) of this CAFO; and
  - (f) waives its rights to appeal the Final Order accompanying this CAFO.
21. For the purpose of this proceeding, Respondent:
  - (a) agrees that this CAFO states a claim upon which relief may be granted against Respondent;

- (b) acknowledges that this CAFO constitutes an enforcement action for purposes of considering Respondent's compliance history in any subsequent enforcement actions;
- (c) waives any rights it may possess at law or in equity to challenge the authority of EPA to bring a civil action in a United States District Court to compel compliance with the CAFO, and to seek an additional penalty for such noncompliance, and agrees that federal law shall govern in any such civil action;
- (d) by executing this CAFO, certifies to the best of its knowledge that Respondent is currently in compliance with all relevant requirements of the Act and its implementing regulations, and that all violations alleged herein, which are neither admitted nor denied, have been corrected;
- (e) waives any right it may have pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.8 to be present during any discussions with, or to be served with and reply to, any memorandum or communication addressed to EPA officials where the purpose of such discussion, memorandum, or communication is to persuade such official to accept and issue this CAFO; and
- (f) agrees to comply with the terms of this CAFO.

22. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.5, the individuals named in the certificate of service are authorized to receive service related to this proceeding and the parties agree to receive service by electronic means.

## VII. TERMS OF PAYMENT

23. Respondent consents to the payment of a civil penalty, which is calculated in accordance with the Act, in the amount of **\$2,685**, which is to be paid within thirty (30) calendar days of the Effective Date of this CAFO.
24. Payment(s) shall be made by cashier's check, certified check, by electronic funds transfer (EFT), or by Automated Clearing House (ACH) (also known as REX or remittance express). If paying by check, the check shall be payable to: Treasurer, United States of America, and the Facility name and docket number for this matter shall be referenced on the face of the check. If Respondent sends payment by the U.S. Postal Service, the payment shall be addressed to:

United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Fines and Penalties  
Cincinnati Finance Center  
P.O. Box 979077  
St. Louis, Missouri 63197-9000

If Respondent sends payment by non-U.S. Postal express mail delivery, the payment shall be sent to:

U.S. Bank  
Government Lockbox 979077  
U.S. EPA Fines & Penalties  
1005 Convention Plaza  
Mail Station: SL-MO-C2-GL

St. Louis, Missouri 63101  
Contact Number: (314) 425-1819

If paying by EFT, Respondent shall transfer the payment to:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York  
ABA: 021030004  
Account Number: 68010727  
SWIFT address: FRNYUS33  
33 Liberty Street  
New York, New York 10045  
Field Tag 4200 of the Fedwire message should read:  
“D 68010727 Environmental Protection Agency”

If paying by ACH, Respondent shall remit payment to:

US Treasury REX / Cashlink ACH Receiver  
ABA: 051036706  
Account Number: 310006, Environmental Protection Agency  
CTX Format Transaction Code 22 – checking  
Physical location of US Treasury facility:  
5700 Rivertech Court  
Riverdale, Maryland 20737  
Contact: Craig Steffen, (513) 487-2091  
REX (Remittance Express): 1-866-234-5681

25. Respondent shall send proof of payment, within 24 hours of payment of the civil penalty, to:

(a) Regional Hearing Clerk  
U.S. EPA Region 4  
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960  
R4\_Regional\_Hearing\_Clerk@epa.gov

and

(b) Carrie Griffith  
Air Enforcement Branch  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. EPA Region 4  
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960  
griffith.carrie@epa.gov

26. “Proof of payment” means, as applicable, a copy of the check, confirmation of credit card or debit card payment, confirmation of wire or automated clearinghouse transfer, and any other information required to demonstrate that payment has been made according to EPA requirements, in the amount due, and identified with the Facility name and “Docket No. EPCRA-04-2021-0609(b).”

27. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717, 31 C.F.R. § 901.9, and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11, if Respondent fails to remit the civil penalty as agreed to herein, EPA is entitled to assess interest and penalties on debts owed to the United States and a charge to cover the costs of processing and handling the delinquent claim. Accordingly, EPA may require the Respondent to pay the following amounts on any amount overdue:

- (a) Interest. Interest will begin to accrue on the civil penalty from the Effective Date of this CAFO. If the civil penalty is paid within 30 days of the Effective Date of this CAFO, Interest is waived. However, if the civil penalty is not paid in full within 30 days of the Effective Date of this CAFO, Interest will continue to accrue on any unpaid portion until the unpaid portion of the civil penalty and accrued Interest are paid. Interest will be assessed at the rate of the United States Treasury tax and loan rate, as established by the Secretary of the Treasury, in accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 3717(a)(1), 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(b), and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(a).
- (b) Non-Payment Penalty. On any portion of a civil penalty more than ninety (90) calendar days past due, Respondent must pay a non-payment penalty of not more than six percent (6%) per annum, which will accrue from the date the penalty payment became due and is not paid, as provided in 31 U.S.C. § 3717(e)(2) and 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(d). This non-payment penalty is in addition to charges which accrue or may accrue under subparagraphs (a) and (c) and will be assessed monthly. 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(c).
- (c) Monthly Handling Charge. Respondent must pay a late payment handling charge to cover the administrative costs of processing and handling the delinquent claim, based on either actual or average cost incurred. 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(c), and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(b). Administrative costs will be assessed monthly throughout the period the debt is overdue except as provided by 40 C.F.R. § 13.12.

28. If Respondent fails to timely pay any portion of the penalty assessed under this CAFO, EPA may:

- (a) refer the debt to a credit reporting agency or a collection agency, 40 C.F.R. §§ 13.13 and 13.14;
- (b) collect the debt by administrative offset (i.e., the withholding of money payable by the United States to, or held by the United States for, a person to satisfy the debt the person owes the Government), which includes, but is not limited to, referral to the Internal Revenue Service for offset against income tax refunds, 40 C.F.R. Part 13, Subparts C and H;
- (c) suspend or revoke Respondent's licenses or other privileges, or suspend or disqualify Respondent from doing business with EPA or engaging in programs EPA sponsors or funds, 40 C.F.R. § 13.17; and/or
- (d) request that the Attorney General bring a civil action in the appropriate district court to recover the amount assessed, in addition to the amounts described above, pursuant to Section 325 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(f)(1).

29. Penalties paid pursuant to this CAFO shall not be deductible for purposes of federal taxes.

## VIII. EFFECT OF CAFO

30. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c), Respondent's full compliance with this CAFO shall only resolve Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations and facts specifically alleged above.
31. Full payment of the civil penalty, as provided in Section VII (Terms of Payment), 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. 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c).
32. Nothing in this CAFO shall relieve Respondent of the duty to comply with all applicable provisions of the Act and other federal, state, or local laws or statutes, nor shall it restrict EPA's authority to seek compliance with any applicable laws or regulations, nor shall it be construed to be a ruling on, or determination of, any issue related to any federal, state, or local permit, except as expressly provided herein.
33. Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the power of EPA to undertake any action against Respondent or any person in response to conditions that may present an imminent and substantial endangerment as provided under the Act.
34. The terms, conditions, and compliance requirements of this CAFO may not be modified or amended except upon the written agreement of both Parties, and approval of the Regional Judicial Officer.
35. The provisions of this CAFO shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent and its officers, directors, employees, agents, trustees, authorized representatives, successors, and assigns.
36. Any change in the legal status of the Respondent, or change in ownership, partnership, corporate or legal status relating to the Facility, will not in any way alter Respondent's obligations and responsibilities under this CAFO.
37. By signing this Consent Agreement, Respondent acknowledges that this CAFO will be available to the public and agrees that this CAFO does not contain any confidential business information or personally identifiable information.
38. By signing this Consent Agreement, the Complainant and the undersigned representative of Respondent each certify that he or she is fully authorized to execute and enter into the terms and conditions of this CAFO and has the legal capacity to bind the party he or she represents to this CAFO.
39. By signing this Consent Agreement, both Parties agree that each party's obligations under this CAFO constitute sufficient consideration for the other party's obligations.
40. By signing this Consent Agreement, Respondent certifies that the information it has supplied concerning this matter was at the time of submission, and continues to be, true, accurate, and complete for each such submission, response, and statement. Respondent acknowledges that there are significant penalties for submitting false or misleading information, including the possibility of fines and imprisonment for knowing submission of such information, under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

41. EPA also reserves the right to revoke this CAFO and settlement penalty if and to the extent that EPA finds, after signing this CAFO, that any information provided by Respondent was materially false or inaccurate at the time such information was provided to EPA. If such false or inaccurate material was provided, EPA reserves the right to assess and collect any and all civil penalties for any violation described herein. EPA shall give Respondent notice of its intent to revoke, which shall not be effective until received by Respondent in writing.
42. Unless specifically stated otherwise in this CAFO, each party shall bear its own attorney's fees, costs, and disbursements incurred in this proceeding.
43. It is the intent of the parties that the provisions of this CAFO are severable. If any provision or authority of this CAFO or the application of this CAFO to any party or circumstances is held by any judicial or administrative authority to be invalid or unenforceable, the application of such provisions to other parties or circumstances and the remainder of the CAFO shall remain in force and shall not be affected thereby.

#### **IX. EFFECTIVE DATE**

44. This CAFO shall become effective after execution of the Final Order by the Regional Judicial Officer, on the date of filing with the Hearing Clerk.

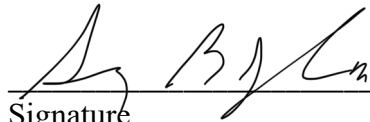
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**Complainant and Respondent Sign on Separate Pages**



The foregoing Consent Agreement In the Matter of **Alabama Pellets, LLC**, Docket No. **EPCRA-04-2021-0609(b)**, is Hereby Stipulated, Agreed, and Approved for Entry.

FOR RESPONDENT:

  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

8/13/21  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: George B Anselms in

Title: President

Address: 6777 Hwy 17, Aliceville AL 35442

The foregoing Consent Agreement In the Matter of **Alabama Pellets, LLC**, Docket No. **EPCRA-04-2021-0609(b)**, is Hereby Stipulated, Agreed, and Approved for Entry.

FOR COMPLAINANT:

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Carol L. Kemker  
Director  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4

In the Matter of:

**Alabama Pellets, LLC,**

Respondent.

Docket No. **EPCRA 04-2021-0609(b)**

**FINAL ORDER**

The Regional Judicial Officer is authorized to ratify this Consent Agreement which memorializes a settlement between Complainant and Respondent. 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.4(b) and 22.18(b)(3). The foregoing Consent Agreement is, therefore, hereby approved, ratified and incorporated by reference into this Final Order in accordance with the *Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits*, 40 C.F.R. Part 22.

The Respondent is hereby ORDERED to comply with all of the terms of the foregoing Consent Agreement effective immediately upon filing of this Consent Agreement and Final Order with the Regional Hearing Clerk. This Final Order disposes of this matter pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.18 and 22.31.

**BEING AGREED, IT IS SO ORDERED.**

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Tanya Floyd  
Regional Judicial Officer

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order, in the Matter of **Alabama Pellets, LLC**, Docket No. **EPCRA-04-2021-0609(b)**, were filed and copies of the same were emailed to the parties as indicated below.

**Via email to all parties at the following email addresses:**

To Respondent:        James L. Noles, Jr., Partner  
                              Barze Taylor Noles Lowther LLC  
                              jnoles@btnllaw.com  
                              2204 Lakeshore Drive, Suite 425  
                              Birmingham, Alabama 35209  
                              205-872-1021

To EPA:                 Carrie Griffith, Environmental Engineer  
                              griffith.carrie@epa.gov  
                              404-562-9175

                              Lucia Mendez, Attorney-Advisor  
                              mendez.lucia@epa.gov  
                              404-562-9637

                              U.S. EPA Region 4  
                              61 Forsyth Street, S.W.  
                              Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960

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Shannon L. Richardson, Regional Hearing Clerk  
U.S. EPA Region 4  
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-8960