

**UNITED STATES  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 9**

75 HAWTHORNE STREET  
San Francisco, California 94105

Sep 15, 2023

IN THE MATTER OF:	)	DOCKET NO. CWA-09-2023-0049
	)	
CMA CGM S.A.	)	
	)	COMPLAINT, CONSENT AGREEMENT
	)	AND FINAL ORDER
Respondent.	)	
	)	<i>Class II Administrative Penalty Proceeding under</i>
APL COLUMBUS, NPDES	)	<i>Section 309(g) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C.</i>
Permit Tracking No. VPBD0278N	)	<i>§1319(g), and 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18</i>
_____	)	

**CONSENT AGREEMENT**

**I. AUTHORITY AND PARTIES**

1. This is a Class II civil administrative penalty proceeding under Section 309(g)(1)(A) and 2(B) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(1)(A) and 2(B), and 40 C.F.R. Part 22 (Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits).
2. Pursuant to Section 309(g) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g), the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is authorized to assess administrative penalties against persons who violate inter alia, Section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1311(a), and/or who has violated any permit condition or limitation implementing any of such sections in a permit issued under Section 402 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1342. The Administrator has delegated this authority to the Regional Administrator of the EPA Region 9, who in turn has delegated this authority to the Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division, hereinafter, "Complainant."
3. Respondent is CMA CGM S.A.
4. This Consent Agreement and Final Order (CA/FO), which contains the elements of a complaint required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.14(a), simultaneously commences and concludes this penalty proceeding, as authorized by 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) and (3).

NOW THEREFORE, before the taking of any testimony, without adjudication of any issue of fact or law, and upon consent by EPA and Respondent, it is hereby STIPTULATED, AGREED, AND ORDERED:

## **II. STATUTORY AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK**

5. Section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1311(a), makes it unlawful for a person to discharge pollutants from a point source into waters of the United States, including the territorial seas, except as authorized, inter alia, by a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit issued pursuant to CWA Section 402, 33 U.S.C. § 1342.

6. Section 402 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1342, establishes the NPDES program and authorizes the EPA and authorized states to issue permits governing the discharge of pollutants from point sources into waters of the United States. Any such discharge is subject to the specific terms and conditions prescribed in the applicable permit.

7. On April 12, 2013, EPA issued the *NPDES General Permit for Discharges Incidental to the Normal Operation of a Vessel*, EPA-HQ-OW-2011-0411 (Vessel General Permit or VGP), with an effective date of December 19, 2013 and an expiration date of midnight December 19, 2018. The VGP authorizes discharges incidental to the normal operation of non-military and non-recreational vessels greater than 79 feet in length into waters subject to the requirements of Section 312(p) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1322(p), and the VGP. Waters subject to the VGP are referred to as “navigable waters” which means waters of the United States, including territorial seas, as those terms are defined at Sections 502(7) and 502(8) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(7) and 1362(8).

8. On December 4, 2018, Section 312(p) of the CWA was amended by the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA) and now provides that all provisions of the 2013 Vessel General Permit shall remain in force and effect, and shall not be modified until the U.S. Coast Guard promulgates regulations that are final, effective, and enforceable for implementation, compliance, and enforcement of new EPA standards of performance for marine pollution control devices for each type of discharge incidental to the normal operations of a vessel. 33 U.S.C. § 1322(p)(3). To date, these regulations have not been promulgated.

9. Section 312(p)(8)(A) of the CWA makes it “unlawful for any person to violate a provision of the Vessel General Permit.” 33 U.S.C. § 1322(p)(8)(A)(i).

10. Under Part 1.5.1.1. of the VGP, if the vessel is 79 feet or longer, greater than or equal to 300 gross tons, or if the vessel has the capacity to hold or discharge more than 8 cubic meters (2,113 gallons) of ballast water, then the vessel owners/operators must submit a signed and certified, complete and accurate Notice of Intent (NOI) to receive authorization under the VGP for their discharges.

11. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(2)(B) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(2)(B), and 40 C.F.R. Part 19.4, the EPA may assess a Class II civil administrative penalty of up to \$25,847 per day of

violation, not to exceed \$323,081 in total, against any person that has violated Section 301(a), or has violated any permit condition or limitation of a permit issued under Section 402 of the CWA that occurred after November 2, 2015, where penalties are assessed on or after January 6, 2023.

### **III. FINDINGS OF FACT, JURISDICTIONAL ALLEGATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

12. Respondent is a privately-owned company headquartered in Marseille, France and therefore a person within the meaning of Section 502(5) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(5).

13. Respondent owns and operates the APL Columbus (Vessel), a container ship registered in Singapore and designated by International Maritime Organization (IMO) number 9597525. The Vessel has been in operation since 2013. The Vessel is 1,076 feet in length, 109,712 gross tons and has a ballast water capacity of 37,454 cubic meters.

14. The Vessel is a “point source” within the meaning of Section 502(14) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(14). The Vessel is subject to the requirements of Section 312(p) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1322(p), and the VGP.

15. On August 31, 2017, Respondent submitted a NOI to EPA to seek coverage under the VGP for the APL Columbus, which was assigned NPDES tracking number VPBD0278N.

16. The VGP requires, among other things:

a. Part 4.4.1 of the VGP requires that for each vessel, owners/operators are required to submit an annual report for each year that they have active permit coverage. For vessels that must file an NOI, this means for as long as they have an active NOI, regardless of whether the vessel was in subject waters during a calendar year. Annual reports must be completed each calendar year and submitted by February 28 of the following year. The vessel owner/operator must complete the annual report form provided in Appendix H of the VGP and submit it to EPA electronically. All analytical monitoring results must be submitted to EPA as part of the annual report. The vessel owner/operator shall respond to all questions accurately and completely, and provide the necessary information and/or data to support each response.

b. Part 4.1.3 requires that comprehensive vessel inspections must be conducted by qualified personnel at least once every 12 months and all findings must be recorded in the vessel’s recordkeeping documentation or logbook. Comprehensive visual inspections must cover all areas of the vessel affected by the requirements in this permit and special attention should be paid to those areas most likely to result in a discharge.

17. Between June 3, 2021, and April 7, 2022, representatives of the EPA conducted compliance reviews of available databases and additional information provided by the Respondent. These reviews included evaluations of the Respondent’s compliance with the requirements of Sections 301, 312(p) and 402 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1311, 1322(p), 1342, and the VGP.

18. The EPA alleges the following violations:

- a. Respondent failed to record findings from annual inspections in the Vessel's recordkeeping documentation or logbook in 2017, as required by Part 4.1.3.
- b. In the 2018 annual report, Respondent failed to report accurate and complete information regarding the annual inspection as required by Part 4.4.1.

#### **IV. ALLEGED VIOLATIONS**

19. The EPA alleges that between December 2017 and February 2019, Respondent's operation of the APL Columbus failed to comply with multiple conditions and limitation in the VGP and EPA is authorized to assess administrative civil penalties pursuant to Section 309(g) of the CWA.

#### **V. ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY**

20. In consideration of the penalty factors of Section 309(g) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g), Respondent shall pay to the United States a civil administrative penalty in the amount of **sixteen thousand, two hundred and ninety-three dollars (\$16,293)** within thirty (30) calendar days of the Effective Date, as defined in Section X below, of this CA/FO.

21. Respondent shall make penalty payment by one of the options listed below:

- a. Check payment: Payment by a cashier's or certified check shall be made payable to "treasurer, United States of America" and be mailed as follows:

*i. If by regular U.S. Postal Service Mail:*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Fines and Penalties  
PO Box 979078  
St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

*ii. If by overnight mail:*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Government Lockbox 979078  
USEPA Fines and Penalties  
1005 Convention Plaza  
SL-MO-C2-GL  
St. Louis, Mo 63101

- b. Automated Clearinghouse Payment: Payment by Automated Clearinghouse (ACH) via Vendor Express shall be made through the U.S. Treasury as follows:

U.S. Treasury REX/Cashlink ACH Receiver  
ABA: 0510367606

Account Number: 310006, Environmental Protection Agency  
CTX Format Transaction Code 22 – checking

- c. Fedwire: Payment by wire transfer to the EPA shall be made through the Federal Reserve Bank of New York as follows:

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)

- d. Online Payment: This payment option can be assessed from the information below

Go to [www.pay.gov](http://www.pay.gov)  
Enter “SFO Form Number 1.1” in the search field  
Open “EPA Miscellaneous Payments – Cincinnati Finance Center” form and complete required fields

Payment instructions are available at <http://www2.epa.gov/financial/makepayment>. If clarification regarding a particular method of payment remittance is needed, contact the EPA Cincinnati Finance Center at (513) 487-2091.

22. To ensure proper credit, Respondent shall include the following transmittal information with the penalty payment: (i) Respondent’s name (as appeared on the CA/FO), complete address, contact person, and phone number; (ii) the EPA case docket number; (iii) the EPA contact person; and (iv) the reason for payment.

23. Concurrent with payment, Respondent shall send a true and correct copy of the payment and accompanying transmittal information to the following addresses:

Regional Hearing Clerk  
Office of Regional Counsel (ORC-1)  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
[r9HearingClerk@epa.gov](mailto:r9HearingClerk@epa.gov)

Daniel Kostek  
Enforcement Protection Specialist

Water Section I, Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
[Kostek.daniel@epa.gov](mailto:Kostek.daniel@epa.gov)

Sarah Ferrif  
Attorney-Advisor  
Office of Regional Counsel, 2-4  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
[Ferrif.sarah@epa.gov](mailto:Ferrif.sarah@epa.gov)

24. Respondent shall not, and shall not allow any other person to, deduct any penalties and interest paid under this CA/FO from federal, state, or local taxes.

25. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(9) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(9), if Respondent fails to pay the assessed penalty on time, the EPA may request the U.S. Department of Justice to bring a civil action to recover the overdue amount, plus interest at currently prevailing rates from the Effective Date of this CA/FO. In such an action, the validity, amount, or appropriateness of the assessed penalty shall not be subject to review. In addition to any assessed penalty and interest, Respondent shall pay attorney fees, costs for collection proceedings, and a quarterly nonpayment penalty, which shall equal 20% of the aggregate amount of Respondent's penalties and nonpayment penalties that are unpaid as of the beginning of such quarter, for each quarter during which such failure to pay persists. The EPA may also take other debt collection actions as authorized by law, including, but not limited to, the Debt Collection Act, 33 U.S.C. § 3711, and 33 C.F.R. Part 13.

## **VI. APPLICABILITY**

26. This CA/FO shall apply to and be binding on Respondent, Respondent's officers, directors, partners, agents, successors and assigns. Action or inaction of any persons, firms, contractors, employees, agents or corporations acting under, through, or for Respondent shall not excuse any failure of Respondent to fully perform its obligations under this CA/FO. Changes in ownership, real property interest, or transfer of personal assets shall not alter Respondent's obligations under this CA/FO.

## **VII. RESPONDENT'S ADMISSIONS AND WAIVERS**

27. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2), for the purpose of this proceeding, Respondent:

- a. admits the jurisdictional allegations of the CA/FO;

- b. neither admits nor denies specific factual allegations contained in the CA/FO;
- c. consents to all conditions specified in this CA/FO and to the assessment of the civil administrative penalty set forth in Section V above;
- d. waives any right to contest the allegations set forth in this CA/FO; and
- e. waives its right to appeal this proposed Final Order.

### **VIII. RESERVATION OF RIGHTS**

28. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c), full payment of the penalty set forth in this CA/FO only resolves Respondent's CWA civil penalty liabilities for the violations specifically alleged herein and does not in any case affect the right of the EPA to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law.

29. This CA/FO is not a permit or modification of any existing permit issued pursuant to any federal, state, or local laws or regulations, and shall in no way relieve or affect Respondent's obligations under any applicable federal, state or local laws, regulations, or permits.

### **IX. ATTORNEYS FEES AND COSTS**

30. Unless otherwise specified, each party shall bear its own attorneys fees and costs.

### **X. EFFECTIVE DATE AND TERMINATION**

31. In accordance with C.F.R. §§ 22.18(b)(3) and 22.31(b), the Effective Date of this CA/FO is the date that the Final Order, having been signed by the Regional Judicial Officer, is filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk. This CA/FO shall terminate when Respondent has complied with the requirements of this CA/FO in full.

### **XI. PUBLIC NOTICE**

32. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(4) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(4), and 40 C.F.R. § 22.45(b), this Consent Agreement is subject to public notice and comment prior to issuance of the proposed Final Order. Complainant reserves the right to withhold or withdraw consent of this Consent Agreement if public comments disclose relevant and material information that was not considered by Complainant in entering into this Consent Agreement. Respondent may withdraw from this Consent Agreement only upon receipt of written notice from EPA that it no longer supports entry of this Consent Agreement.

33. Where appropriate, the EPA has consulted with the affected state regarding this penalty action in accordance with Section 309(g)(1) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(1).

For Complainant the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9

**AMY MILLER-** Digitally signed by  
**BOWEN** AMY MILLER-BOWEN  
Date: 2023.07.28  
16:50:20 -07'00'

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Amy C. Miller-Bowen  
Director  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division



For Respondent CMA CGM S.A.

DocuSigned by:  
  
8CD9CB8E64A842A...

24 July 2023 | 23:00 CEST

Name: Kristi Thompson

Date:

Title: SVP & Chief Governance Officer, CMA CGM (America) LLC, as agent for CMA CGM S.A.

**FINAL ORDER**

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that this Consent Agreement and Final Order (U.S. EPA Docket No. CWA-09-2023-0049) be entered, and that Respondent shall pay a civil penalty in the amount of **sixteen thousand, two hundred and ninety-three dollars (\$16,293)** in accordance with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

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Beatrice Wong	Date
Regional Judicial Officer	
U.S. EPA, Region IX	

## **CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify the original copy of the foregoing Consent Agreement and associated Final Order in the matter of CMA CGM S.A. – APL Columbus (Docket No. CWA-09-2023-0049), was filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk, Region IX and that a true and correct copy was sent by electronic mail to the following parties:

### **RESPONDENT**

Kristi Thompson  
SVP & Chief Governance Officer  
CMA CGM (America) LLC  
5701 Lake Wright Drive  
Norfolk, VA 23502  
[Usa.kthompson@usa.cma-cgm.com](mailto:Usa.kthompson@usa.cma-cgm.com)

### **COMPLAINANT**

Erin Brewer  
Assistant Regional Counsel  
U.S. EPA – Region IX  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, California 94105  
[Brewer.Erin@epa.gov](mailto:Brewer.Erin@epa.gov)

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Ponly J. Tu Date  
Regional Hearing Clerk  
U.S. EPA – Region IX