

FILED

2017 MAY 24 PM 4: 14

UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
REGION 6 EPA REGION VI
BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATOR

In the Matter of:

City of Alexandria
Alexandria, Louisiana

Respondent

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EPA Docket No.
CAA-06-2017-3340

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER

The Director of the Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Division of the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA"), Region 6 ("Complainant") and the City of Alexandria ("Respondent") in the above-referenced proceeding, hereby agree to resolve this matter through the issuance of this Consent Agreement and Final Order ("CAFO").

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This proceeding for the assessment of civil penalties is brought by EPA pursuant to sections 113(a)(3) and 113(d)(1)(B) of the Clean Air Act, as amended ("Act" or "CAA"), 42 U.S.C. §§ 7413(a)(3) and 7413(d)(1)(B), and is simultaneously commenced and concluded through the issuance of this CAFO pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b), 22.18(b)(2) and (3), and 22.34.

2. For purposes of this proceeding, Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations contained herein; however, Respondent neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations contained in this CAFO.

3. Respondent explicitly waives any right to contest the allegations and its right to appeal the proposed Final Order set forth herein, and waives all defenses, which have been raised or could have been raised to the claims set forth in this CAFO.

4. Respondent does not waive any rights or defenses which have been raised or could be raised in any state law proceeding.

5. Compliance with all the terms and conditions of this CAFO shall resolve only those violations, which are set forth herein.

6. Respondent consents to the issuance of this CAFO and to the assessment and payment of the stated civil penalty in the amount and by the method set forth in this CAFO.

II. ALLEGATIONS

7. Respondent is a municipality located in Louisiana.

8. Respondent owns and operates a municipal water system. As part of this system, Respondent owns and operates a point of entry site located at 7880 Coliseum Boulevard, Alexandria, Louisiana ("Facility").

9. The Facility is a half-acre site consisting of a water well, a 150,000 gallon above-ground storage tank, and a duplex booster station with chlorine gas injection. Respondent uses up to two two-ton chlorine cylinders attached to the booster station to process raw water before delivering the water into the municipal water system.

10. Chlorine is a toxic substance listed in Table 3 of 40 CFR § 68.130.

11. On July 20, 2016, two city employees arrived at the Facility to remove the chlorine regulator from the #2 chlorine cylinder. Before removing the regulator, the operator used the valve wrench to attempt to close the vapor valve. The vapor valve did not move, indicating to the operator that the valve was already in the closed position.

The other employee on site made three attempts to turn the wrench to close the vapor valve but was unable to do so.

12. After the employees were unable to stop the chlorine release, they notified the Alexandria Police Department, the Alexandria Fire Department, the Louisiana State Police Spill Response Hotline, and the National Response Center.

13. Local emergency responders began arriving on scene at approximately 4:30 p.m.

14. The Louisiana State Police Hazmat Unit was notified at 4:45 p.m. and arrived on the scene at 5:35 p.m. The LSP Hazmat Unit secured the leaking valve at 5:49 p.m. The leak lasted 92 minutes.

15. Respondent calculated a total release of 450 pounds of chlorine gas into the ambient air.

16. The release was investigated by Respondent as well as the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. Respondent also had its chlorine contractor, DPC Enterprises, perform an investigation on the Facility's chlorine container and valve.

17. Based on those investigations, Respondent concluded that the release was a result of the operator failing to close the valve before removing the regulator.

18. In response to the release, Respondent spent \$27,598.15 purchasing emergency response and training equipment to improve its ability to prevent and respond to chemical releases.

19. In October 2016, Respondent passed an ordinance appropriating \$349,500 to install new chlorinators, automatic shut-off valves, leak detectors, and piping at the facility and Respondent's six other point of entry sites.

20. Pursuant to section 112(r)(1) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(1), an owner/operator of a stationary source producing, processing, handling or storing substances listed pursuant to section 112(r)(3) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(3), or any other extremely hazardous substance, has a general duty to: (1) identify hazards which may result from accidental releases of such substances using appropriate hazard assessment techniques; (2) design and maintain a safe facility, taking such steps as are necessary to prevent releases; and (3) minimize the consequences of accidental releases that do occur.

21. Respondent is a “person” as that term is defined by section 302(e) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7602(e).

22. The Facility is a “stationary source” as that term is defined by section 112(r)(2)(C) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(2)(C).

23. Respondent is the “owner or operator” as those terms are defined by section 112(a)(9) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(a)(9), of a stationary source.

24. The release of chemicals at the Facility on July 20, 2016, constituted an “accidental release” as that term is defined by section 112(r)(2)(A) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(2)(A).

25. Respondent is therefore subject to the assessment of penalties pursuant to sections 113(a)(3) and 113(d)(1)(B) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7413(a)(3) and 7413(d)(1)(B), for at least one day of violation of the general duty clause of section 112(r)(1) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(1).

III. TERMS OF SETTLEMENT

A. CIVIL PENALTY

26. Pursuant to the authority granted in sections 113(a)(3) and 113(d)(1)(B) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 7413(a)(3) and 7413(d)(1)(B), and taking into consideration the size of the municipality, the economic impact of the penalty on the Respondent's business, the Respondent's full compliance history and good faith efforts to comply, the duration of the violation, payment by Respondent of penalties previously assessed for the same violation (if any), the economic benefit of noncompliance, the seriousness of the violation, Respondent's cooperation, as well as other factors which justice may require including Respondent's expenditure of \$377,098.15 to improve chemical safety as a result of this violation, EPA and Respondent agree that an appropriate penalty to settle this matter is \$20,000.

27. Respondent shall pay the assessed penalty within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this CAFO. Respondent shall pay the assessed civil penalty by certified check, cashier's check, or wire transfer, made payable to "Treasurer, United States of America, EPA – Region 6." Payment shall be remitted in one of four ways: regular U.S. Postal Service mail (including certified mail); overnight mail; wire transfer; or U.S. Postal Service express mail - the check should be remitted to:

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

For overnight mail (non-U.S. Postal Service; e.g., FedEx), the check should be remitted

to:

U.S. Bank
Government Lockbox 979077
U.S. EPA, Fines and Penalties
1005 Convention Plaza
SL-MO-C2-GL
St. Louis, MO 63101
Phone No. (314) 418-1028

For wire transfer, the payment should be remitted to:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York
ABA: 021030004
Account No. 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"

PLEASE NOTE: Docket number CAA-06-2017-3340 shall be clearly typed on the check to ensure proper credit. If payment is made by check, the check shall also be accompanied by a transmittal letter and shall reference the Respondent's name and address, the case name, and the docket number of this CAFO. If payment is made by wire service, the wire transfer instructions shall reference the Respondent's name and address, the case name, and the docket number of this CAFO. The Respondent shall also send a simultaneous notice of such payment, including a copy of the check and transmittal letter or wire transfer instructions to the following:

Justin McDowell
Enforcement Officer (6EN-AS)
Compliance Assurance and Enforcement Division
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Lorena Vaughn
Regional Hearing Clerk (6RC-D)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Respondent's adherence to these instructions will ensure that proper credit is given when penalties are received in the Region.

28. 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.

29. 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 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).

30. 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.

B. PARTIES BOUND

31. The provisions of this CAFO shall apply to and be binding upon the parties to this action, their officers, directors, agents, employees, successors, and assignees.

32. The undersigned representative of each party to this CAFO certifies that he or she is fully authorized by the party whom he or she represents to enter into the terms and conditions of this CAFO and to execute and to legally bind that party to it.

C. RETENTION OF ENFORCEMENT RIGHTS

33. EPA does not waive any rights or remedies available to EPA for any other violations by the Respondent of Federal or State laws, regulations, or permitting conditions.

34. Nothing in this CAFO shall relieve the Respondent of the duty to comply with all applicable provisions of section 112(r) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r), and 40 C.F.R. Part 68.

35. Nothing in this CAFO shall limit the power and authority of EPA or the United States to take, direct, or order all actions to protect public health, welfare, or the environment, or prevent, abate, or minimize an actual or threatened release of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants at or from the Facility. Furthermore, except as specifically set forth herein, nothing in this CAFO shall be construed to prevent or limit EPA's civil and criminal authorities, or that of other Federal, State, or local agencies or departments to obtain penalties or injunctive relief under other Federal, State, or local laws or regulations.

36. In any subsequent administrative or judicial proceeding initiated by the Complainant or the United States for injunctive relief, civil penalties, or other appropriate relief relating to the Facility, Respondent shall not assert, and may not maintain, any defense or claim based upon the principles of waiver, res judicata, collateral estoppel, issue preclusion, claim-splitting, or other defenses based upon any contention that the claims raised by the Complainant or the United States in the subsequent proceeding were or should have been brought in the instant case, except with respect to the claims that have been specifically resolved pursuant to this CAFO.

D. COSTS

37. Each party shall bear its own costs and attorney's fees. Furthermore, Respondent specifically waives its right to seek reimbursement of its costs and attorney's fees under 5 U.S.C. § 504 and 40 C.F.R. Part 17.

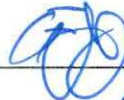
E. EFFECTIVE DATE

38. This CAFO becomes effective upon filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

**THE UNDERSIGNED PARTIES CONSENT TO THE ENTRY OF THIS
CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER:**


FOR THE RESPONDENT:

9 May 2017
Date


LaBarroll # 22807
Alexandria City Atty

FOR THE COMPLAINANT:

5/23/2017
Date


Cheryl T. Seager
Director
Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to section 113(d) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d), and 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 this CAFO. 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. The Respondent is ordered to comply with the terms of settlement as set forth in the Consent Agreement. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b), this Final Order shall become effective upon filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

Date: 5-24-17



Thomas Rucki
Regional Judicial Officer

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the 24th day of May, 2017, the original and a copy of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order (CAFO) was hand-delivered to the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. EPA - Region 6, 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733, and that a true and correct copy of the CAFO was placed in the United States Mail, to the following by the method indicated:

CERTIFIED MAIL - RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED: # 10010360000366748124

City of Alexandria
Attn.: V. Joyce Matthews
Roedel Parsons Koch Blache
Balhoff & McCollister
8440 Jefferson Highway, Suite 301
Baton Rouge, LA 70809

Date: 05-24-2017

Ravi Jackson
U.S. EPA, Region 6
Dallas, Texas