



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

APR 03 2009

REPLY TO THE ATTENTION OF:

SC-6J

CERTIFIED MAIL
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Rodney A. Hermann
Controller
Northern Country Coop
P.O. Box 217
Stacyville, IA 50476-0217

Re: Northern Country Coop, Emmons, Minnesota
Proposed Consent Agreement and Final Order
Docket No. **CERCLA-05-2009-0006**

Dear Mr. Hermann:

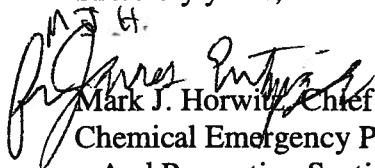
Enclosed please find a fully executed Consent Agreement and Final Order (CAFO) in resolution of the above case. The U.S. EPA has filed the other original CAFO with the Regional Hearing Clerk on April 3, 2009.

Please pay the CERCLA civil penalty in the amount of \$13,493 in the manner prescribed in paragraphs 27 and 28, and reference you check with the billing document number 2750930B006 and the docket number CERCLA-05-2009-0006.

Your payment is due on May 3, 2009.

Please feel free to contact Ruth McNamara at (312) 353-3193 if you have any questions regarding the enclosed documents. Please direct any legal questions to James Morris, Associate Regional Counsel, at (312) 886-6632. Thank you for your assistance in resolving this matter.

Sincerely yours,


Mark J. Horwitz, Chief

Chemical Emergency Preparedness
And Prevention Section

Enclosure

RECEIVED
APR 20 2009

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5

REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL

In the Matter of:)	Docket No. CERCLA-05-2009-0006
)	
Northern Country Coop)	Proceeding to Assess a Civil Penalty
Emmons, Minnesota)	Under Section 109(b) of the
)	Comprehensive Environmental Response,
Respondent.)	Compensation, and Liability Act
<hr/>		

Consent Agreement and Final Order
Preliminary Statement

1. This is an administrative action commenced and concluded under Section 109(b) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 9609(b), and Sections 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) and (3) 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 40 C.F.R. Part 22.
2. The Complainant is, by lawful delegation, the Chief of the Chemical Emergency Preparedness Prevention Section, Emergency Response Branch 1, United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), Region 5.
3. Respondent is Northern Country Coop, a corporation doing business in the State of Minnesota.
4. Where the parties agree to settle one or more causes of action before the filing of a complaint, the administrative action may be commenced and concluded simultaneously by the issuance of a consent agreement and final order (CAFO). 40 C.F.R. § 22.13(b).
5. The parties agree that settling this action without the filing of a complaint or the adjudication of any issue of fact or law is in their interest and in the public interest.

6. Respondent consents to the assessment of the civil penalty specified in this CAFO, and to the terms of this CAFO.

Jurisdiction and Waiver of Right to Hearing

7. Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations in this CAFO and neither admits nor denies the factual allegations in this CAFO.

8. Respondent waives its right to request a hearing as provided at 40 C.F.R. § 22.15(c), any right to contest the allegations in this CAFO, and its right to appeal this CAFO.

Statutory and Regulatory Background

9. Section 103(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9603(a), requires any person in charge of a facility to immediately notify the National Response Center (NRC) as soon as that person has knowledge of any release of a hazardous substance from the facility in an amount equal to or greater than the hazardous substance's reportable quantity.

10. Section 103(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9603(a), provides a mechanism to alert federal agencies that a response action may be necessary to prevent deaths or injuries to emergency responders, facility personnel and the local community. A delay or failure to notify could seriously hamper the government's response to an emergency and pose serious threats to human health and the environment.

11. Section 109(b) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9609(b), authorizes U.S. EPA to assess a civil penalty of up to \$25,000 per day of violation of CERCLA Section 103. The Debt Collection Improvements Act of 1996, 31 U.S.C. § 3701, and its implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 19 increased the statutory maximum penalty to \$27,500 per day of violation that occurred from January 31, 1997 through March 15, 2004, and to \$32,500 per day of violation for violations that occurred after March 15, 2004.

Factual Allegations and Alleged Violations

12. Respondent is a “person” as that term is defined under Section 101(21) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(21).

13. At all times relevant to this CAFO, Respondent was in charge of a facility located on State Street, in Emmons, Minnesota (facility).

14. Respondent’s facility consists a building, structure, equipment, storage container, motor vehicle, rolling stock, or any site or area where a hazardous substance has been deposited, stored, disposed of, or placed, or otherwise come to be located.

15. Respondent’s facility is a “facility” as that term is defined under Section 101(9) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(9).

16. Ammonia CAS# 7664-41-7 is a “hazardous substance” as that term is defined under Section 101(14) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(14).

17. Ammonia CAS# 7664-41-7 has a reportable quantity of 100 pounds, as indicated at 40 C.F.R. Part 302, Table 302.4.

18. On June 27, 2006, at or about 1500 Central Time, a release occurred from Respondent’s facility of approximately 1,430 pounds of ammonia (the release).

19. In a 24 hour time period, the release of ammonia exceeded 100 pounds.

20. During the release, approximately 1,430 pounds of ammonia was emitted, emptied, discharged, or escaped into the ambient air.

21. The release is a “release” as that term is defined under Section 101(22) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(22).

22. Respondent had knowledge of the release on June 27, 2006, at approximately 1500 Central Time.

23. Respondent notified the NRC of the release on June 28, 2006, at 1538 Central Time.
24. Respondent did not immediately notify the NRC as soon as Respondent had knowledge of the release.
25. Respondent's failure to notify immediately the NRC of the release is a violation of Section 103(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9603(a).

Civil Penalty

26. In consideration of Northern Country Coop's cooperation and willingness to quickly settle this matter by entering into this expedited settlement agreement U.S. EPA has determined that an appropriate civil penalty to settle this action is \$13,493.
27. Within 30 days after the effective date of this CAFO, Respondent must pay a \$13,493 civil penalty for the CERCLA violation. Respondent must pay the penalty by sending a cashier's or certified check, payable to "EPA Hazardous Substance Superfund," to:

[for checks sent by regular U.S. postal service]

U.S. EPA
Superfund Payments
Cincinnati Finance Center
P.O. Box 979076
St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

[for checks sent by express mail]

U.S. Bank
1005 Convention Plaza
Mail Station SL-MO-C2GL
St. Louis, MO 63101

The check must note the following: In the Matter of Northern Country Coop, the docket number of this CAFO and the billing document number 0750930B006.

[for electronic funds transfer] Respondent must pay the penalty by electronic funds transfer, payable to "EPA Hazardous Substance Superfund," and sent to:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York
ABA No. 021030004
Account No. 68010727
33 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10045
Field Tag 4200 of the Fedwire message should read "D68010727
Environmental Protection Agency"

In the comment or description field of the electronic funds transfer, state the following: In the Matter of Northern Country Coop, docket number of this CAFO and the bill document number

27509 30 B000.

28. A transmittal letter, stating the Respondent's name, case title, Respondent's complete address, the case docket number and the billing document number must accompany the payment.

Respondent must send a copy of the check and transmittal letter to:

Regional Hearing Clerk, (E-19J)
U.S. EPA, Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

Ruth McNamara, (SC-6J)
Chemical Emergency Preparedness
and Prevention Section
U.S. EPA, Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

James Morris (C-14J)
Office of Regional Counsel
U.S. EPA, Region 5
77 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

29. This civil penalty is not deductible for federal tax purposes.

30. If Respondent does not timely pay the civil penalty, U.S. EPA may bring an action to collect any unpaid portion of the penalty with interest, handling charges, nonpayment penalties and the United States' enforcement expenses for the collection action. The validity, amount and appropriateness of the civil penalty are not reviewable in a collection action.

31. Pursuant to 31 C.F.R. § 901.9, Respondent must pay the following on any amount overdue under this CAFO. Interest will accrue on any amount overdue from the date the payment was due at a rate established pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717. Respondent must pay a \$15 handling charge each month that any portion of the penalty is more than 30 days past due. In addition, U.S. EPA will assess a 6 percent per year penalty on any principal amount 90 days past due.

General Provisions

32. This CAFO resolves only Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations in the CAFO.

33. This CAFO does not affect the right of the U.S. EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law.

34. Respondent certifies that that it is complying with Section 103(a) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9603(a).

35. This CAFO does not affect Respondent's responsibility to comply with CERCLA and other applicable federal, state and local laws, and regulations.

36. This CAFO is a "final order" for purposes of U.S. EPA's Enforcement Response Policy for Section 103 of CERCLA.

37. The terms of this CAFO bind Respondent and its successors, and assigns.


38. Each person signing this consent agreement certifies that he or she has the authority to sign for the party whom he or she represents and to bind that party to its terms.

39. Each party agrees to bear its own costs and fees, including attorneys' fees, in this action.

40. This CAFO constitutes the entire agreement between the parties.

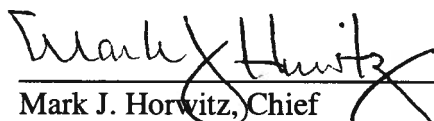
Respondent

03/04/09
Date


Rodney A. Hermann, Controller
Northern Country Coop

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Complainant

3/19/09
Date


Mark J. Horwitz, Chief
Chemical Emergency Preparedness and Prevention Section
Emergency Response Branch 1
Superfund Division

3/26/09
Date


Richard C. Karl, Director
Superfund Division

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Final Order

This Consent Agreement and Final Order, as agreed to by the parties, shall become effective immediately upon filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk. This Final Order concludes this proceeding pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.18 and 22.31. IT IS SO ORDERED.

3/30/09
Date

Walter W. Kovalich
for
Bharat Mathur
Acting Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5

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APR 02 2009
REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY

In the Matter of:
Northern Country Coop, Emmons, Minnesota
Docket No. CERCLA-05-2009-0006

Certificate of Service

I, Ruth McNamara, certify that I hand delivered the original of the Consent Agreement and Final Order, docket number *CERCLA-05-2009-0006*, to the Regional Hearing Clerk, Region 5, United States Environmental Protection Agency, personally served a copy on the Regional Judicial Officer, and mailed correct copies by first-class, postage prepaid, certified mail, return receipt requested, to Respondent by placing them in the custody of the United States Postal Service addressed as follows:

Rodney A. Hermann
Controller
Northern Country Coop
P.O. Box 217
Stacyville, IA 50476-0217

RECEIVED
APR 02 2009
REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY

on the 3rd day of April, 2009

Ruth McNamara
Ruth McNamara
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 5