

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATOR**

In the Matter of)
)
PUERTO RICO AQUEDUCT AND)
SEWER AUTHORITY,)
)
Ponce Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant)
)
Respondent)

Docket No. CWA-02-2008-3457

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL
PROTECTION AGENCY-REG. II
2008 JAN 31 PM 2:48
REGIONAL HEARING
CLERK

PREHEARING ORDER

As you have been previously notified, I am designated to preside over this proceeding. This proceeding will be governed by the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. §22.1 et seq., (“Rules of Practice”). The parties are advised to familiarize themselves with the applicable statute(s) and the Rules of Practice.

Agency policy strongly supports settlement and the procedures regarding documenting settlements are set forth in Section 22.18 of the Rules of Practice, 40 C.F.R. §22.18. If settlement discussions in this proceeding have already been undertaken, the parties are commended for taking the initiative to resolve this matter informally and expeditiously. Each party is reminded that pursuing this matter through a hearing and possible appeals will require the expenditure of significant amounts of time and financial resources. The parties should also realistically consider the risk of not prevailing in the proceeding despite such expenditures. A settlement allows the parties to control the outcome of the case, whereas a judicial decision takes such control away. With such thoughts in mind the parties are directed to engage in a settlement conference on or before **February 15, 2008**, and attempt to reach an amicable resolution of this matter. The Complainant shall file a status report regarding settlement on or before **February 22, 2008**. If the case is settled, the Consent Agreement and Final Order signed by the parties should be filed no later than **March 14, 2008**, with a copy sent to the undersigned.

Should a Consent Agreement not be finalized on or before the latter date, the parties must prepare for hearing and shall strictly comply with the prehearing requirements of this Order.

This Order is issued pursuant to Section 22.19(a) of the Rules. Accordingly, it is directed that the following prehearing exchange take place between the parties:

1. Pursuant to Section 22.19(a) of the Rules, each party shall file with the Regional

1. Pursuant to Section 22.19(a) of the Rules, each party shall file with the Regional Hearing Clerk and shall serve on the opposing party and on the Presiding Judge:

(A) the names of the expert and other witnesses intended to be called at hearing, identifying each as a fact witness or an expert witness, with a brief narrative summary of their expected testimony, or a statement that no witnesses will be called;

(B) copies of all documents and exhibits intended to be introduced into evidence. Included among the documents produced shall be a curriculum vita or resume for each identified expert witness. The documents and exhibits shall be identified as "Complainant's" or "Respondent's" exhibit, as appropriate, and numbered with Arabic numerals (e.g., Complainant's Ex. 1); and

(C) a statement as to its views as to the appropriate place of hearing and estimate the time needed to present its direct case. See Sections 22.21(d) and 22.19(d) of the Rules. Also state if translation services are necessary in regard to the testimony of any anticipated witness(es), and, if so, state the language to be translated.

2. In addition, the Complainant shall submit the following as part of its Initial Prehearing Exchange:

(A) a copy of Respondent's NPDES permit, or portions thereof relevant to the Complaint, referenced Paragraphs 20 through 25 of the Complaint;

(B) a copy of all documents in support of the allegations in Paragraph 26 of the Complaint, including: (i) Respondent's reports and/or notifications dated April 2, 2007, April 3, 2007, April 4, 2007 and April 13, 2007, (ii) a statement as to whether the dates "May 30" and "May 31, 2007" in Paragraph 26 and 26(a) of the Complaint are errors which should read "March 30" and "March 31, 2007" respectively, and (iii) any documentation that Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority ("PRASA") reported through telephone that the Ponce Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant ("RWWTP") discharged through an unauthorized outfall on March 30, 2007, as referenced in Paragraph 26(a) of the Complaint;

(C) a copy of any documents in support of Paragraph 28 of the Complaint, including Respondent's April 9, 2007 answer to EPA's Information Request Letter dated April 4, 2007;

(D) a copy of any documents in support of Paragraph 29 of the Complaint, including the written notification dated April 13, 2007;

(E) a copy of any report(s) of the April 11, 2007 Reconnaissance Inspection referenced in Paragraph 30 of the Complaint, and a copy of any maps, drawings, diagrams, photographs, videos, and/or field notes created or taken by an EPA representative during the inspection;

(F) a copy of any documents in support of the allegation in Paragraphs 29 and

30.b of the Complaint that the event caused the discharge of raw sewage into the Caribbean Sea;

(G) a copy of the April 17, 2007 "amended" response to the Information Request Letter, referenced in Paragraph 31 of the Complaint;

(H) a copy of any documentation of the telephone conversation with Respondent's representatives on April 18, 2007 as referenced in Paragraph 32 of the Complaint;

(I) a copy of the Compliance Order referenced in Paragraph 33 of the Complaint;

(J) a copy of PRASA's notifications referenced in the Paragraphs 35(a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) of the Complaint;

(K) a copy of the letter dated June 4, 2007, referenced in Paragraph 36 of the Complaint;

(L) a copy of any EPA policy or guidance document upon which Complainant has relied upon, or intends to rely upon, in consideration of a proposed penalty; and

(M) a statement regarding whether the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980 (PRA), 44 U.S.C. § 3501 *et seq.*, applies to this proceeding, whether there is a current Office of Management and Budget control number involved herein and whether the provisions of Section 3512 of the PRA are applicable in this case.

3. The Respondent shall also submit the following as part of its Prehearing Exchange:

(A) a copy of any notes, maps, diagrams, photographs or documents in support of Respondent's position as to the event on April 9, 2007, referenced in Paragraph 10 of the Answer, and in support of Respondent's assertions in Paragraph 11 of the Answer;

(B) a copy of any documents in support of Respondent's assertion in response to Paragraph 35 of the Complaint;

(C) a copy of any documents in support of Affirmative Defenses 5 and 6; and

(D) if Respondent takes the position that proposed penalty should be reduced or eliminated on any grounds, such as the remaining "Affirmative Defenses" or "inability to pay," provide a copy of any and all documents it intends to rely upon in support of such position.

4. Complainant shall submit as part of its Rebuttal Prehearing Exchange a statement and/or any documents in response to Respondent's Prehearing Exchange submittals as to provisions 3(A) through 3(D) above.

The prehearing exchanges called for above shall be filed in seriatim fashion, pursuant to the following schedule:

- March 14, 2008** - Complainant's Initial Prehearing Exchange
- April 4, 2008** - Respondent's Prehearing Exchange, including any direct and/or rebuttal evidence
- April 18, 2008** - Complainant's Rebuttal Prehearing Exchange

Section 22.19(a) of the Rules of Practice provides that, except in accordance with Section 22.22(a), any document not included in the prehearing exchange shall not be admitted into evidence, and any witness whose name and testimony summary are not included in the prehearing exchange shall not be allowed to testify. Therefore, each party should thoughtfully prepare its prehearing exchange. Any supplements to prehearing exchange shall be filed with an accompanying motion to supplement the prehearing exchange.

The Complaint herein gave the Respondent notice and opportunity for a hearing, in accordance with Section 554 of the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), 5 U.S.C. § 554. In their Answer to the Complaint, the Respondents requested such a hearing. In this regard, Section 554(c)(2) of the APA sets out that a hearing be conducted under Section 556 of the APA. Section 556(d) provides that a party is entitled to present its case or defense by oral or documentary evidence, to submit rebuttal evidence, and to conduct such cross-examination as may be required for a full and true disclosure of the facts. Thus, the Respondent has the right to defend against the Complainant's charges by way of direct evidence, rebuttal evidence or through cross-examination of the Complainant's witness. Respondents are entitled to elect any or all three means to pursue its defenses. If the Respondents intend to elect only to conduct cross-examination of Complainant's witnesses and to forgo the presentation of direct and/or rebuttal evidence, the Respondent shall serve a statement to that effect on or before the date for filing its prehearing exchange. **The Respondent is hereby notified that its failure to either comply with the prehearing exchange requirements set forth herein or to state that it is electing only to conduct cross-examination of the Complainant's witnesses, can result in the entry of a default judgment against it.** The Complainant is notified that its failure to file its prehearing exchange in a timely manner can result in a dismissal of the case with prejudice. **THE MERE PENDENCY OF SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATIONS OR EVEN THE EXISTENCE OF A SETTLEMENT IN PRINCIPLE DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A BASIS FOR FAILING TO STRICTLY COMPLY WITH THE PREHEARING EXCHANGE REQUIREMENTS. ONLY THE FILING WITH THE HEARING CLERK OF A FULLY EXECUTED CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER, OR ON AN ORDER OF THE JUDGE, EXCUSES NONCOMPLIANCE WITH FILING DEADLINES.** The parties are advised **NOT** to include, attach or refer to any terms of settlement offers or agreements in any document submitted to the Presiding Judge, and no copies of Consent Agreements and Final Orders shall be submitted, or attached to any document submitted, to the Presiding Judge except those that are fully executed and filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

Prehearing exchange information required by this Order to be sent to the Presiding Judge, as well as any other further pleadings, if sent by mail, shall be addressed as follows:

The Honorable Susan L. Biro,
Chief Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Law Judges
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail Code 1900L
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20460

Hand-delivered packages transported by Federal Express or any delivery service which x-rays their packages as part of their routine security procedures, may be delivered directly to the Offices of the Administrative Law Judges at 1099 14th Street, N.W., Suite 350, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Telephone contact may be made with my legal assistant, Maria Whiting-Beale at (202) 564-6259 or my staff attorney, Lisa Knight, Esquire at (202) 564-6291. The facsimile number is (202) 565-0044.

If any party wishes to receive, by e-mail or by facsimile, an expedited courtesy copy of decisions and substantive orders issued in this proceeding, this party shall submit a request for expedited courtesy copies by letter addressed to Maria Whiting-Beale, Legal Staff Assistant, Office of Administrative Law Judges, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 1900 L, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20460. The letter shall include the case docket number, the e-mail address or facsimile number to which the copies are to be sent, and a statement as to whether the party requests: (A) expedited courtesy copies of the initial decision and/or any orders on motion for accelerated decision or dismissal, or (B) expedited courtesy copies of all decisions and substantive orders. The undersigned's office will endeavor to comply with such requests, but does not guarantee the party's receipt of expedited courtesy copies.

Prior to filing any motion, the moving party is directed to contact the other party or parties to determine whether the other party has any objection to the granting of the relief sought in the motion. The motion shall then state the position of the other party or parties. The mere consent of the other parties to the relief sought does not assure that the motion will be granted and no reliance should be placed on the granting of an unopposed motion. Furthermore, all motions must be submitted in sufficient time to permit the filing of a response by the other party and/or the issuance of a ruling on the motion before any relevant deadline set by this or any subsequent order. Sections 22.16(b) and 22.7(c) of the Rules of Practice, 40 C.F. R. §§ 22.16(b) and 22.7(c), allow a fifteen-day response period for motions with an additional five days added thereto if the pleading is served by mail. Motions not filed in a timely manner may not be considered.

Furthermore, upon the filing of a motion, a response to a motion, or a reply to a motion, a party may submit a written request for an oral argument on the motion, pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §

22.16(d). Included in the request for oral argument shall be a statement as to the proposed appropriate location(s) for the argument to take place. The Office of Administrative Law Judges recently acquired access to the state of the art videoconferencing capabilities, and strongly encourages the parties to consider utilizing such technology for oral arguments on motions so as to minimize the expenditure of time and monetary resources in connection with such arguments. A request for oral argument may be granted, in the undersigned's discretion, where further clarification and elaboration of arguments would be of assistance in ruling on the motion.

If either party intends to file any dispositive motion regarding liability, such as a motion for accelerated decision or motion to dismiss under 40 C.F.R. § 22.20 (a), it shall be filed **within thirty days after the due date for Complainant's Rebuttal Prehearing Exchange.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Biro', written over a horizontal line.

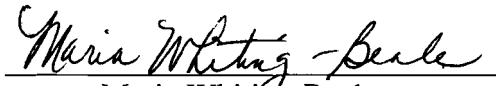
Susan L. Biro
Chief Administrative Law Judge

Dated: January 30, 2007
Washington, D.C.

In the Matter of Puerto Rico Aqueduct and Sewer Authority, Ponce Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, Respondent
Docket No. CWA-02-2008-3451

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that the foregoing **Prehearing Order**, dated January 30, 2008, was sent this day in the following manner to the addressees listed below:



Maria Whiting-Beale
Legal Staff Assistant

Dated: January 30, 2008

Original And One Copy By Pouch Mail To:

Karen Maples
Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. EPA
290 Broadway, 16th Floor
New York, NY 10007-1866

Copy By Regular Mail To:

Carolina Jordan Garcia, Esquire
Office of Regional Counsel
U.S. EPA
Caribbean Field Division
1492 Ponce de Leon Avenue, Suite 417
San Juan, PR 00907-4127

Jorge Marrero-Narvaez, Esquire
PRASA
P.O. Box 7066
Santurce, PR 00916