



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

9CT 3 0 2008

CERTIFIED MAIL 7007 2680 0001 3596 5096
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Easley Combined Utilities
c/o Mr. Joel Ledbetter
General Manager
P.O. Box 619
Easley, South Carolina 29641


Re: Consent Agreement and Final Order
Docket No. CWA-04-2008-4532(b)

Dear Mr. Ledbetter:

Enclosed please find a fully executed copy of the Consent Agreement and Final Order that has been finalized by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Regional Judicial Officer. Please make note of the provisions under Paragraph IV. Payment.

Should you have any questions or problems, please contact Ms. Amanda Driskell at (404) 562-9735.

Sincerely,



Douglas F. Mundrick, P.E., Chief
Water Programs Enforcement Branch
Water Management Division

Enclosure

cc: South Carolina Department of Health
and Environmental Control

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4

IN THE MATTER OF

Easley Combined Utilities
P.O. Box 619
Easley, South Carolina 29641
NPDES Permit No. SC0039853

Respondent

Consent Agreement and
Final Order

Docket No. CWA-04-2008-4532

RECEIVED
PERMITS CLEAN

2008 OCT 29 PM 1:57

RECEIVED
EPA REGION IV

CONSENT AGREEMENT

I. Statutory Authority

1. This is a civil penalty proceeding pursuant to Section 309(g)(2)(A) of the Clean Water Act ("CWA"), 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(2)(A), and the *Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, Issuance of Compliance or Corrective Action Orders and the Revocation, Termination or Suspension of Permits*, including Subpart I, published at 64 Fed. Reg. 40176 (July 23, 1999), codified at 40 Code of Federal Regulations ("C.F.R.") Part 22 ("Part 22").

2. The authority to take action under Section 309(g)(2)(A) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(2)(A), is vested in the Administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA"). The Administrator has delegated this authority to the Regional Administrator, Region 4, who in turn has delegated this authority to the Director of the Water Management Division, who in turn has delegated this authority to the Chief of the Water Programs Enforcement Branch of EPA Region 4 ("Complainant").

II. Allegations

3. At all times relevant to this action, Easley Combined Utilities ("Respondent"), is a "person" within the meaning of Section 502(5) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1362.

4. At all times relevant to this action, Respondent owned and/or operated a wastewater treatment facility located in Easley, South Carolina, operating under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") Permit Number SC0039853 ("Permit").

5. To accomplish the objective of the CWA, defined in Section 101(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1251(a), to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters, Section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a), prohibits the discharge of pollutants by any person into waters of the United States except

as in compliance with an NPDES permit issued pursuant to Section 402 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1342.

6. Part I, Section A(1) of the Permit includes chronic whole effluent toxicity (“WET”) limits and requires the Respondent to conduct toxicity tests to determine compliance with those limitations in accordance with Part IV of the Permit.

7. Toxicity tests conducted by the Respondent for July 2007, the results of which were submitted as part of the Respondent’s monthly Discharge Monitoring Reports (hereinafter, the “DMRs”) to EPA, revealed the effluent to be toxic to *Ceriodaphnia dubia* in violation of the chronic WET limit in the Permit. As particularly set forth in the Permit, the chronic WET limit requires that the inhibition concentration causing a 25% reduction in survival, reproduction, and/or growth of the test organisms, as compared to the control group shall be greater than 100% effluent concentration. However, the inhibition concentration causing 25% reduction in survival, reproduction, and/or growth of the test organisms, as compared to the control group, in this month was less than 100% effluent concentration, and thus outside the acceptable range of the Permit.

8. Toxicity tests conducted by the Respondent for January 2008, the results of which were submitted as part of the Respondent’s monthly DMRs to EPA, revealed the effluent to be toxic to *Ceriodaphnia dubia* in violation of the chronic WET limit in the Permit. As particularly set forth in the Permit, the chronic WET limit requires that the inhibition concentration causing a 25% reduction in survival, reproduction, and/or growth of the test organisms, as compared to the control group shall be greater than 100% effluent concentration. However, the inhibition concentration causing 25% reduction in survival, reproduction, and/or growth of the test organisms, as compared to the control group, in this month was less than 100% effluent concentration, and thus outside the acceptable range of the Permit.

9. Toxicity tests conducted by the Respondent for February 2008, the results of which were submitted as part of the Respondent’s monthly DMRs to EPA, revealed the effluent to be toxic to *Ceriodaphnia dubia* in violation of the chronic WET limit in the Permit. As particularly set forth in the Permit, the chronic WET limit requires that the inhibition concentration causing a 25% reduction in survival, reproduction, and/or growth of the test organisms, as compared to the control group shall be greater than 100% effluent concentration. However, the inhibition concentration causing 25% reduction in survival, reproduction, and/or growth of the test organisms, as compared to the control group, for both tests conducted in this month was less than 100% effluent concentration, and thus outside the acceptable range of the Permit.

10. Toxicity tests conducted by the Respondent for February 2008, the results of which were submitted as part of the Respondent’s monthly DMRs to EPA, revealed the effluent to be toxic to *Pimephales promelas* in violation of the chronic WET limit in the Permit. As particularly set forth in the Permit, the chronic WET limit requires that the inhibition concentration causing a 25% reduction in survival, reproduction, and/or growth of the test organisms, as compared to the control group shall be greater than 100%

effluent concentration. However, the inhibition concentration causing 25% reduction in survival, reproduction, and/or growth of the test organisms, as compared to the control group, in this month was less than 100% effluent concentration, and thus outside the acceptable range of the Permit.

11. Therefore, the Respondent has violated Section 301(a) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1311(a) and the Permit, issued pursuant to Section 402 of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1342, in that the Respondent failed to comply with the WET limits of the Permit as set forth herein.

III. Stipulations and Findings

12. Complainant and Respondent have conferred for the purpose of settlement pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.18 and desire to resolve this matter and settle the allegations described herein without a formal hearing. Therefore, without the taking of any evidence or testimony, the making of any argument, the adjudication of any issue in this matter, and in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.13(b), this Consent Agreement and Final Order (“CA/FO”) will simultaneously commence and conclude this matter.

13. For the purposes of this CA/FO, Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations set out above and neither admits nor denies the factual allegations set out above.

14. Respondent hereby waives its right to contest the allegations set out above and its right to appeal the Final Order accompanying this Consent Agreement.

15. Respondent consents to the assessment of and agrees to pay the civil penalty as set forth in this CA/FO and consents to the other conditions set forth in this CA/FO.

16. By signing this CA/FO, Respondent certifies that the information it has supplied concerning this matter was at the time of submission, and is, truthful, accurate, and complete for each such submission, response, and statement. Respondent realizes that there are significant penalties for submitting false or misleading information, including the possibility of fines and/or imprisonment for knowing submission of such information.

17. EPA reserves the right to assess and collect any and all civil penalties for any violation described herein to the extent that any information or certification provided by Respondent was materially false or inaccurate at the time such information or certification was provided to EPA.

18. Complainant and Respondent agree to settle this matter by their execution of this CA/FO. The parties agree that the settlement of this matter is in the public interest and that this CA/FO is consistent with the applicable requirements of the CWA.

IV. Payment

19. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(2)(A) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(2)(A), and 40 C.F.R. Part 19, and considering the nature of the violations and other relevant factors, EPA has determined that twelve thousand and six hundred dollars (\$12,600) is an appropriate civil penalty to settle this action.

20. Respondent shall submit payment of the penalty specified in the preceding paragraph within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this CA/FO.

21. Respondent shall make all payments to EPA via a cashier's or certified check, payable to the order of "Treasurer, United States of America". The check shall reference on its face the name of Respondent and the Docket Number of this CA/FO. Such payment shall be tendered to:

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

22. At the time of payment, Respondent shall send a separate copy of the check, and a written statement that payment has been made in accordance with this CA/FO, to the following persons at the following addresses:

Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960

and

Ms. Mary Mattox
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
Water Management Division
Water Programs Enforcement Branch
Gulf Enforcement Section
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960

23. The penalty amount specified in Paragraph 19 above shall represent civil penalties assessed by EPA and shall not be deductible for purposes of Federal taxes.

24. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. Parts 13 and 31 U.S.C. § 3717 et seq., if EPA does not receive payment of the penalty assessed by this CA/FO in full by its due date, interest shall accrue on the unpaid balance from the due date through the date of payment at an

annual rate equal to the rate of the current value of funds to the United States Treasury as prescribed and published by the Secretary of the Treasury. If all or part of the payment is overdue, EPA will assess a late-payment handling charge of \$15.00, with an additional delinquent notice charge of \$15.00 for each subsequent thirty (30) day period. EPA will also assess on a monthly basis an up to six percent (6%) per annum penalty on any principal amount not paid within ninety (90) days of the due date.

25. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(9) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(9), failure by the Respondent to pay the penalty assessed by the CA/FO in full by its due date may subject the Respondent to a civil action to collect the assessed penalty plus interest (at currently prevailing rates from the effective date of this CA/FO), attorneys fees, costs for collection proceedings and a quarterly nonpayment penalty shall be in an amount equal to twenty percent (20%) of the aggregate amount of such penalty and nonpayment penalty which are unpaid as of beginning of such quarter. In any such collection action, the validity, amount and appropriateness of the penalty and of this CA/FO shall not be subject to review.

V. General Provisions

26. This CA/FO shall not relieve Respondent of its obligation to comply with all applicable provisions of federal, state, or local law, nor shall it be construed to be a ruling on, or determination of, any issue related to any federal, state, or local permit. Other than as expressed herein, compliance with this CA/FO shall not be a defense to any actions subsequently commenced pursuant to federal laws and regulations administered by the EPA.

27. Nothing in this CA/FO shall be construed as prohibiting, altering, or in any way limiting the ability of the United States to seek any other remedies or sanctions available by virtue of Respondent's violation of this CA/FO or of the statutes and regulations upon which this agreement is based, or for Respondent's violation of any federal or state statute, regulation or permit.

28. Except as otherwise set forth herein, this CA/FO constitutes a settlement by Complainant and Respondent of all claims for civil penalties pursuant to the CWA with respect to only those violations alleged in this CA/FO. Except as otherwise set forth herein, compliance with this CA/FO shall resolve the allegations of violations contained herein. Nothing in this CA/FO is intended to nor shall be construed to operate in any way to resolve any criminal liability of the Respondent, or other liability resulting from violations that were not alleged in this CA/FO. Other than as expressed herein, Complainant does not waive any right to bring an enforcement action against Respondent for violation of any federal or state statute, regulation or permit, to initiate an action for imminent and substantial endangerment, or to pursue criminal enforcement.

29. Each undersigned representative of the parties to this CA/FO certifies that he or she is fully authorized to enter into the terms and conditions of this CA/FO and to execute and legally bind that party to it.

30. This CA/FO applies to and is binding upon Respondent and its officers, directors, employees, agents, successors, and assigns.

31. Any change in the legal status of Respondent including, but not limited to, any transfer of assets of real or personal property, shall not alter Respondent's responsibilities under this CA/FO.

32. Each party shall bear its own costs and attorneys fees in connection with the action resolved by this CA/FO.

33. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.5, the individuals below are authorized to receive service relating to this proceeding.

For Complainant:

William Bush
Associate Regional Counsel
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
61 Forsyth Street, S.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960
(404) 562-9538

For Respondent:

Joel Ledbetter, General Manager
Easley Combined Utilities
P.O. Box 619
Easley, South Carolina 29641
(864) 855-8103

34. The parties acknowledge and agree that this CA/FO is subject to the requirements of 40 C.F.R. § 22.45(c)(4), which provides a right to petition to set aside a consent agreement and proposed final order based on comments received during the public comment period.

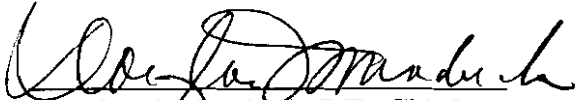
35. Pursuant to Section 309(g) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g), and 40 C.F.R. § 22.38(b), Complainant represents that the State of South Carolina was provided prior opportunity to consult with Complainant regarding this matter.

VI. Effective Date

36. The effective date of this CA/FO shall be the date on which the CA/FO is filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.


AGREED AND CONSENTED TO:

For COMPLAINANT, U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY:


Douglas F. Mundrick, P.E., Chief
Water Programs Enforcement Branch
Water Management Division
U.S. EPA, Region 4

Date: 9/15/08

For RESPONDENT:


Joel Ledbetter, General Manager
Easley Combined Utilities

Date: AUG. 18, 2008

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4**

IN THE MATTER OF

Easley Combined Utilities
P.O. Box 619
Easley, South Carolina 29641
NPDES Permit No. SC0039853

Respondent

**CONSENT AGREEMENT AND
FINAL ORDER**

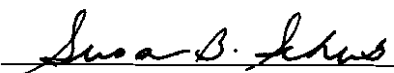
Docket No. CWA-04-2008-4532(b)

FINAL ORDER

In accordance with the *Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, Issuance of Compliance or Corrective Action Orders and the Revocation, Termination or Suspension of Permits*, including Subpart I, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, and authorities delegated to me, the foregoing Consent Agreement is hereby approved and incorporated by reference into this Final Order. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(2)(A) of the CWA, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(2)(A), Respondent is hereby ordered to comply with the terms of the foregoing Consent Agreement.

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Date: Oct. 30, 2008



Susan B. Schub
Regional Judicial Officer

Docket No. CWA-04-2008-4532(b)

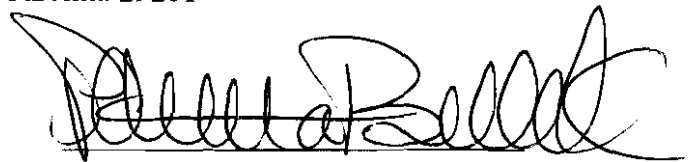
CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned certifies that a true and correct copy of the attached **CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER** in the matter of the **Easley Combined Utilities, South Carolina, Docket No. CWA-04-2008-4532(b)** (filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk on OCT 30 2008, 2008) was served on OCT 30 2008, 2008, in the manner specified to each of the persons listed below.

By hand-delivery: William Bush
Associate Regional Counsel
U.S. EPA, Region 4
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

By certified mail,
Return-receipt requested: Joel Ledbetter, General Manager
Easley Combined Utilities
P.O. Box 619
Easley, South Carolina 29641

David Wilson, Chief
Bureau of Water
South Carolina Department of Health
and Environmental Control
2600 Bull Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201



Ms. Patricia A. Bullock
Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. EPA, Region 4
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 562-9511