UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6

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REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
EPA REGION VI

In the Matter of	§	
	§	
U.S. Cotton, LLC,	§	Docket No. CWA-06-2011-1763
a New Mexico Company,	§	
	§	
Respondent	§	CONSENT AGREEMENT AND
	§	FINAL ORDER
Permit No. NMU001697		

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This Consent Agreement and Final Order ("CAFO") is issued under the authority vested in the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") pursuant to Section 309(g) of the Clean Water Act ("the Act"), 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g). This CAFO is issued in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.18, as described in the "Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits."

2. On May 31, 2011, EPA Region 6 issued to the Respondent an Administrative Complaint ("Complaint") under Section 309(g) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g), which proposed to assess a civil penalty against Respondent, and gave notice of the Respondent's opportunity to request a hearing on the proposed administrative penalty assessment.

3. The Respondent and EPA ("Parties") agree that settlement of the relevant matters without litigation will save time and resources, that it is in the public's interest, and that the entry of this CAFO is the most appropriate means of resolving such matters. Compliance with all the terms and conditions of this CAFO resolves only those violations alleged in the Complaint.

4. The Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations of the Complaint; however, the Respondent neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations and conclusions of law contained in the Complaint or the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law contained in this CAFO.

5. The Respondent expressly waives any right to contest the factual allegations or Conclusions of Law contained in the Complaint and this CAFO and waives its right to appeal the Final Order set forth herein.

6. Before the taking of any testimony, and without adjudication of any issue of law or fact, the Parties agree to the terms of this CAFO and to its issuance. The Respondent consents to the assessment and payment of a civil penalty in the amount and by the method stated below.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

7. U.S. Cotton, LLC ("Respondent") is a limited liability company doing business in the State of New Mexico, and as such, Respondent is a "person," as that term is defined at Section 502(5) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(5), and 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

8. At all times relevant to this action, the Respondent owned or operated a cotton cosmetics products manufacturing facility, located at 510 and 590 Laser Drive, in Rio Rancho, Sandoval County, New Mexico ("facility") and was therefore an "owner or operator" within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

9. The Complaint specified Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law that are hereby incorporated by reference and alleged, among other things, that at the relevant times: the Respondent was a "person" that "owned or operated" a facility that acted as a "point source" subject to a "discharge" of "pollutants" to identified "waters of the United States" within the

meaning of Section 502 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362, and 40 C.F.R. § 122.2; Respondent and the facility were subject to the provisions of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1251 et seq., and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") program; and the Respondent violated Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311, by discharging storm water from the site without permit coverage under the EPA Multi-Sector General Storm Water Permit for Industrial Activities, as specified in the Complaint.

10. With the issuance of the Complaint, the State of New Mexico was notified and given an opportunity to consult with EPA regarding the proposed assessment of an administrative penalty against the Respondent. EPA notified the public of the Complaint and afforded the public thirty (30) days to comment on the Complaint and proposed penalty. At the expiration of the notice period, EPA received no comments from the public.

III. TERMS OF SETTLEMENT

A. PENALTY PROVISIONS

11. Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, EPA Region 6, considering the relevant criteria pursuant to Section 309(g)(3) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(3), and acting pursuant to the authority of Section 309(g) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g), hereby orders that the Respondent shall pay to the United States a civil penalty in the amount of three thousand dollars ($3,000.00) to settle the violations as alleged in the Complaint.

12. Payment shall be made within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this CAFO, by one of the following methods:

a. By mailing a bank check, a cashier's check or certified check, payable to "Treasurer of the United States," to the following address:

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

b. By wire transfer to:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York
ABA: 021030004
Account Number: 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"

c. By overnight mail (Express, FedEx, DHL, etc.) to:

U.S. Bank
Government Lockbox 979077
U.S. EPA Fines & Penalties
1005 Convention Plaza
SL-MO-C2-GL
St. Louis, MO 63101
Phone: 314-418-1028

d. By credit card payments to: https://www.pay.gov/paygov

(enter sfo 1.1 in the search field)

"In the Matter of U.S. Cotton, LLC, Docket No. CWA-06-2011-1763" should be clearly marked on the check or other payment method to ensure credit for payment.

13. The Respondent shall send simultaneous notice of payment, including a copy of the check, to each of the following:

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

(b) Chief, NPDES Compliance Section (6EN-WC)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

(c) Chief, Water Enforcement Legal Branch (6RC-EW)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

The Respondent's adherence to these procedures will ensure proper credit when payment is received by EPA.

14. The 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.

15. 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 respective 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).

16. EPA will also assess a fifteen dollar ($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 fifteen dollars ($15.00) for each subsequent thirty (30)-day period that the penalty remains unpaid. In addition, a penalty charge of up to six percent (6%) 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.

17. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(9) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(9), any person who fails to pay on a timely basis a civil penalty ordered or assessed under this section shall be required to pay, in addition to such penalty and interest, the United States' enforcement expenses including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees and costs incurred by the United States for collection proceedings, and a quarterly non-payment penalty for each quarter during which such failure to pay persists. Such non-payment penalty shall be twenty percent (20%) of the aggregate amount of such person's outstanding penalties and non-payment penalties accrued as of the beginning of each quarter.

18. Failure by the Respondent to pay the penalty assessed according to the terms of this CAFO, in full, by its due date, may subject the Respondent to a civil action to collect the assessed penalty and any accrued interest and penalties. In the event a collection action is necessary, the Respondent shall pay—in addition to any applicable penalty, fees, and interest described herein—all reasonable costs and expenses, including legal expenses and court costs, incurred by the United States for enforcement and collection proceedings for non-payment of the amounts agreed hereunder, pursuant to Section 309(g)(9) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(9).

In any such collection action, the validity, amount, and appropriateness of the penalty, and the terms of this CAFO shall not be subject to review.

IV. GENERAL PROVISIONS

19. To execute this Agreement, the Respondent shall forward this copy of the CAFO, with original signature, to:

Mr. Efren Ordoñez (6RC-EW)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

20. Issuance of this CAFO does not relieve the Respondent from responsibility to comply with all requirements of the Act and the requirements of any permits issued thereunder, as described in Section 309(g)(7) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(7), nor does it constitute a waiver by EPA of its right to enforce compliance with the requirements of the Respondent's permits or other requirements of the Act by actions pursuant to Section 309 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319.

21. The provisions of this CAFO shall be binding upon the Respondent, its officers or officials, managers, employees, and their successors or assigns, in their capacity on behalf of the Respondent.

22. Each party agrees to bear its own costs and attorneys' fees in this matter, except to the extent that the Respondent may be responsible for reasonable costs and expenses of enforcement and collection proceedings for failure to comply with the terms of this CAFO.

23. Each undersigned representative of the parties to this agreement certifies that he or she is fully authorized by the party represented to enter into the terms and conditions of this agreement and to execute and legally bind that party to it.

24. In recognition and acceptance of the foregoing:

For U.S. Cotton, LLC

10/28/11
Date

John Blevins
Director
Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

3-1-12
Date

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to 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 the Complaint. Nothing in this Final Order shall be construed to waive, extinguish, or otherwise affect the 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 and the civil penalty payment instructions 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.

Issuance Date: 3-5-12

Regional Judicial Officer
U.S. EPA, Region 6

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the 5 day of March, 2014, the original of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was hand-delivered to the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. EPA, Region 6 (6RC-D), 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733, and that a true and correct copy was placed in the United States mail, by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the following:

Mr. Jay Hackney, Plant Manager
U.S. Cotton, LLC
Rio Rancho Plant 13
510/590 Laser Road
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

with a copy, first class postage prepaid, to:

Mr. James Bearzi
Bureau Chief
Surface Water Quality Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
P.O. Box 5469
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469

Mr. John Nims, CEO
U.S. Cotton, LLC
531 Cotton Blossom Circle
Gastonia, NC 28054

Copy hand-delivered:

Mr. Efren Ordoñez (6RC-EW)

Dated: Jackie Allen