

U.S. EPA settles for \$72,000 in penalties for sugar mill

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reached a \$72,000 settlement with a sugar mill south of New Roads, in connection with discharges into two area bayous.

In another case, EPA has proposed a \$4,250 penalty against a hazardous waste firm that disposed of PCB-contaminated waste in a landfill. The \$72,000 settlement with Alma Plantation, Ltd. came after EPA proposed a \$125,000 penalty against the firm. EPA alleged that Alma failed to conduct sufficient monitoring and sampling on its discharge during portions of 1985, 1986 and 1987, failed to submit quarterly reports on sampling in 1986, 1987 and part of 1988, and discharged without a permit in 1986, 1987 and 1988.

David Stewart, Alma's general manager, said the problems were the result of an environmental consultant failing to fulfill EPA requirements. A new consultant has been hired.

"We're going to pay it (the settlement) and do a better job of watching the expiration dates and stay on track," Stewart said.

A Louisiana environmental official said the state is also looking at discharge problems from the mill and is concerned about the effects on nearby streams as a result of increased wastewater from the plant without increased wastewater treatment.

Stewart said the mill has been expanding. That has resulted in various "shortfalls," including "impoundment" of the water discharge, he said. Alma is coming up with a construction schedule to deal with that situation.

Roger Meacham of EPA in Dallas said that in addition to paying the settlement, Alma will be required to take the action necessary to make the

mill's discharge meet federal standards.

In the other case, Chemical Waste Management in Sulphur unknowingly disposed of a load of PCB-contaminated material at its hazardous waste landfill, which is not licensed to accept PCBs at levels above 50 parts per million.

An earlier load of the waste from a cleanup in Texas had been tested and found to be within acceptable limits, as had initial tests of the waste at the site being cleaned up, said attorney Gerald Waller.

Two truckloads of waste were disposed, but when a third truckload was tested it showed the presence of PCBs above 50 ppm, he said. Subsequent laboratory analysis of the material in the second load showed it contained PCBs at a level of 120 ppm.

The company informed EPA of the problem and the agency advised the disposal firm to leave the disposed loads of waste in place, but to route other trucks to a facility licensed to handle PCB waste, Waller said. The waste was sent to Chemical Waste Management's landfill in Emelle, Ala.

"It's a quandary," Waller said, noting that the company did more testing than was required, but the material still slipped by.

So many of these soil cleanup jobs pose the problem of whether there is going to be 51 ppm of PCBs," he said.

"Even if you're doing more sampling than you're required to do, you can still have a problem."


Meacham said EPA has held settlement talks with the firm, but has come to no agreement. EPA is now awaiting a letter from the company indicating what corrective action it will take to prevent such an incident from occurring again.

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