Environmental Criminal Enforcement/Clean Air Act: Erie, Pennsylvania Coke Manufacturing Plant Owner Guilty Plea



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The United States Attorney's Office, Western District of Pennsylvania issued a June 20th news release stating that Erie Coke Corporation ("ECC") has pleaded guilty in federal court to two counts related to alleged criminal air emission violations.

ECC is stated to own and formerly operate a now-shuttered coke manufacturing plant in Erie, Pennsylvania.

The news release alleges that ECC:

…conspired with its employees to violate the Clean Air Act by, among other things, removing caps on heating flues atop the coke oven batteries in order to allow combustion gases to vent directly into the air and avoid the plant's environmental monitoring system.

The results of such actions are stated to have been the emission of pollutants in violation of specific provisions of the Title V Permit governing:

- Opacity limits.
- Discharge of raw coke oven gas.

ECC is stated to have subsequently knowingly submitted emissions monitoring data to regulators each quarter that did not reflect the actual amount of emissions.

ECC has agreed to pay a fine of $700,000.00. The fine called for under the plea agreement is stated to have been determined in part based on the funds currently available to the corporation, which ceased business in 2019.

Sentencing is set for October 7th.

A copy of the news release can be downloaded here.