Wastewater Discharge: Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Notice of Civil Penalty Assessment/Order Addressing Klamath Falls Plywood Mill

Walter Wright, Jr.
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

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The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality ("ODEQ") issued a July 22nd Notice of Civil Penalty Assessment and Order ("Notice") to Columbia Plywood Corporation ("CPC") addressing alleged violations of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") Permit. See Case No. WQ/I-ER-2025-562.

The Notice provides that CPC operates a plywood mill in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

The facility is stated to have coverage under an NPDES Waste Discharge Permit which allows it to construct, install, modify, or operate a wastewater collection, treatment, control and disposal system, including in-stream log handling, and to discharge to waters of the state adequately treated wastewater in conformance with all the requirements, limitations, and conditions set forth in the Permit.

A hydraulic hose fitting on a cherry picker crane used to handle logs in the river is stated to have ruptured on February 20th, causing the release of f approximately 40 gallons of hydraulic oil into the Upper Klamath River. Hydraulic oil is stated to be a substance that may cause pollution of waters of the state and is therefore waste under ORS 468B.005(9).

The Permit is stated to not authorize the discharge of hydraulic oil to the Upper Klamath River.

The Notice states that CPC therefore violated ORS 468B.005(1)(a) by discharging a waste, specifically hydraulic oil into waters of the state without a Waste Discharge Permit.

A civil penalty of $2,600.00 is proposed to be assessed.

The Notice provides certain appeal rights.

A copy of the Notice can be downloaded here.