Wastewater Enforcement: Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Civil Penalty Assessment/Order Addressing Portland Groundwater Remediation System



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12/31/2025

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality ("ODEQ") issued an October 9th Notice of Civil Penalty Assessment and Order ("Notice") to Seaport Midstream Partners, LLC ("SMP") addressing violations of a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") Permit. See No. WQ-M-WR-2024-027.

The Notice provides that an NPDES General Permit authorizes SMP to discharge treated wastewater to the Willamette River.

SMP is stated to have been assigned coverage under an NPDES General Permit for a groundwater remediation system ("System") in Portland, Oregon.

The System is stated to have on March 20, 2023, had a wastewater bypass one of the two granulated activated carbon filter tanks through a misaligned valve and discharged into the Willamette River. The discharge of of partially treated wastewater and observation of a visible sheen in the boomed area of the Willamette River was discovered by SMP.

The General Permit prohibits discharges that cause or contribute to violations of water quality standards, which would be a violation of ORS 468B.025(1)(b).

SMP is stated to have subsequently developed best management practices including valve labeling and staff training to avoid recurring violations.

A $7,800.00 civil penalty is assessed.

The Notice provides an opportunity for an appeal.

A copy of the Notice can be found here.