

**STATE OF TENNESSEE
AIR POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD**

IN THE MATTER OF:)	DIVISION OF AIR POLLUTION CONTROL
)	
RICHARD H. AYERS dba HICKORY VALLEY GIN COMPANY,)	
)	
RESPONDENT.)	CASE NO. APC20-0128

**TECHNICAL SECRETARY'S ORDER AND
ASSESSMENT OF CIVIL PENALTY**

Michelle Walker Owenby, Technical Secretary of the Air Pollution Control Board, states:

PARTIES

I.

Michelle Walker Owenby is the Technical Secretary of the Air Pollution Control Board ("Board") and Director of the Division of Air Pollution Control ("Division"), Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation ("Department").

II.

Richard H. Ayers dba Hickory Valley Gin Company ("Respondent") operates a cotton gin at 320 Railroad Street, Hickory Valley, Tennessee. Service of process may be made upon Richard H. Ayers, P.O. Box 40, Hickory Valley, Tennessee 38042.

AUTHORITY

III.

The Technical Secretary may assess a civil penalty of up to \$25,000.00 per day for each day of violation of the Tennessee Air Quality Act, Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 68-201-101 to -121 ("Act"), or Tennessee Air Pollution Control Regulations, Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 1200-03-01 to -36; 0400-30-01 to -39, ("Rules"). Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-201-116. The Technical Secretary may issue an order for correction to the responsible person when provisions of the Act or Rules are violated, and such person may be liable for resulting damages to the State. *Id.*

IV.

The Respondent is a “person,” Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-201-102(7), and has violated the Act and Rules.

V.

“Air contaminant” means particulate matter, dust, fumes, gas, mist, smoke, vapor, or any combinations thereof. Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-201-102(1).

VI.

“Air contaminant source” means any and all sources of emission of air contaminants, whether privately or publicly owned or operated. Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-201-102(2). The Respondent operates an air contaminant source.

FACTS

VII.

On September 4, 2012, the Technical Secretary issued operating permit number 066498P (“Permit 066498P”), (facility 35-0017), to the Respondent for a cotton gin.

VIII.

Condition 4 of Permit 066498P states:

The number of bales processed during a ginning season shall not exceed 8,700 bales.

IX.

Condition 5 of Permit 066498P states, in pertinent part:

Records shall be maintained to establish the number of bales processed during each ginning season. These records must be maintained at the gin location or business office and kept available for inspection by the Technical Secretary or his representative. At the end of the cotton ginning season and no later than April 1, a report of the number of bales processed during the ginning season shall be submitted to the Division[.]

X.

On October 9, 2020, the Division received the Respondent's Annual Report of Bales Processed ("Report") for the 2019 ginning season. The Report which was submitted to the Division approximately 192 days late indicated that 8,778 bales were processed by the Respondent during the 2019 ginning season. Therefore, the Respondent violated conditions 4 and 5 of Permit 066498P.

XI.

On October 12, 2020, the Division issued a Notice of Violation to the Respondent for the violations discussed in paragraph X.

VIOLATION

XII.

By failing to comply with conditions 4 and 5 of Permit 066498P, the Respondent violated Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 1200-03-09-.02(6), which states, in pertinent part:

Operation of each air contaminant source shall be in accordance with the provisions and stipulations set forth in the operating permit, all provisions of these regulations, and all provisions of the Tennessee Air Quality Act.

ORDER AND ASSESSMENT OF CIVIL PENALTY

XIII.

The Respondent is assessed a civil penalty of \$2,250.00 for violation of the Act and Rules, to be paid to the Department at the following address:

Treasurer, State of Tennessee
Division of Fiscal Services - Consolidated Fees Section
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower, 10th Floor
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

The civil penalty shall be delivered to the Department on or before the thirty-first day after receipt of this Order and Assessment of Civil Penalty. The case number, APC22-0128, should be clearly written on all correspondence.

RESERVATION OF RIGHTS

In issuing this Order and Assessment of Civil Penalty, the Department does not implicitly or expressly waive any provision of the Act or Rules promulgated thereunder or the authority to assess costs, civil penalties, and/or damages incurred by the State against the Respondent. The Department expressly reserves all rights it has at law and in equity to order further corrective action, assess civil penalties and/or damages, and to pursue further enforcement action including, but not limited to, monetary and injunctive relief. Compliance with this order will be considered as a mitigating factor in determining the need for future enforcement action.

NOTICE OF RIGHTS

The Respondent may appeal this Order and Assessment. Tenn. Code Ann. §§ 68-201-108(a) and 68-201-116(b). To do so, a written petition setting forth the reasons for requesting a hearing must be received by the Technical Secretary within 30 days of the date the Respondent received this Order and Assessment or this Order and Assessment becomes final. Any petition for review must be directed to:

Commissioner of the Department of Environment and Conservation
c/o Jenny L. Howard, General Counsel
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower, 2nd Floor
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

If an appeal is filed, an initial hearing of this matter will be conducted by an Administrative Judge as a contested case hearing. Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-201-108(a); Tenn. Code Ann. § 4-5-301 to -325; Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 1360-04-01. Such hearings are legal proceedings in the nature of a trial. Individual respondents may represent themselves or be represented by an attorney licensed to practice law in Tennessee. Artificial respondents (*e.g.*, corporations, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, etc.) cannot engage in the practice of law and therefore

may only pursue an appeal through an attorney licensed to practice law in Tennessee. Low-income individuals may be eligible for representation at reduced or no cost through a local bar association or legal aid organization.

At the conclusion of any initial hearing, the Administrative Judge has the authority to affirm, modify, or deny this Order and Assessment of Civil Penalty, including the authority to increase or decrease the penalty. Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-201-116. The Administrative Judge, on behalf of the Board, has the authority to assess additional damages incurred by the Department including, but not limited to, all docketing expenses associated with the setting of the matter for a hearing, and the hourly fees incurred due to the presence of the Administrative Judge and a court reporter.

Technical questions and other correspondence involving compliance issues should be sent to:

Kevin McLain, Division of Air Pollution Control
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
William R. Snodgrass Tennessee Tower, 15th Floor
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Attorneys should contact the undersigned counsel of record. The case number, APC20-0128, should be written on all correspondence regarding this matter.

Issued by the Technical Secretary, Air Pollution Control Board, Department of Environment and Conservation, on February 15, 2023.



Michelle Walker Owenby
Technical Secretary
Air Pollution Control Board

Reviewed by:



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