

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF:)
)
Frank Middleton)
Selma, Dallas County, Alabama)

****Proposed****
ADMINISTRATIVE
ORDER NO: 19-__-AP

FINDINGS

Pursuant to the provisions of the Alabama Environmental Management Act, Ala. Code §§ 22-22A-1 to 22- 22A-17, as amended, the Alabama Air Pollution Control Act, Ala. Code §§ 22-28-1 to 22-28-23, as amended, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (hereinafter, the “Department” or “ADEM”) Administrative Code of Regulations (hereinafter, “ADEM Admin. Code R.”) promulgated pursuant thereto, and the federal Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. 7401 to 7671q, *as amended*, the Department makes the following FINDINGS:

1. Frank Middleton (hereinafter, “Middleton”) owns real property located on County Road 32 in Selma, Dallas County, Alabama (hereinafter “Site”).
2. The Department is a duly constituted department of the State of Alabama pursuant to Ala. Code §§ 22-22A-1 to 22-22A-17, as amended.
3. Pursuant to Ala. Code § 22-22A-4(n), as amended, the Department is the state air pollution control agency for the purposes of the federal Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. 7401 to 7671q, *as amended*. In addition, the Department is authorized to administer and enforce the provisions of the Alabama Air Pollution Control Act, Ala. Code §§ 22-28-1 to 22-28-23, as amended.

4. ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)1 states that "...open burning must take place on the property on which the combustible fuel originates."

5. ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)4 states that "Only vegetation and untreated wood may be burned. It is unauthorized to open burn heavy oils, asphalt products, plastics, vinyl materials, insulation, paper, cardboard, natural or synthetic rubber, salvage or scrap materials, chemicals, garbage, treated or painted wood, or any trash."

6. On March 21, 2019, the Department received a complaint of unauthorized open burning of various housing debris and vegetation by Middleton at the Site.

7. On March 26, 2019, Department personnel conducted a complaint investigation and observed evidence of unauthorized open burning of imported vegetation on property located latitude/ longitude (32.434888, -87.112079). Upon inspection of a second site located at latitude/ longitude (32.429682, -87.117273), Department personnel observed smoking piles that included but were not limited to vegetation, house trailers, hay bales, bricks, and other various refuse. In a phone conversation, Middleton stated that two house trailers were burned on the property.

8. Pursuant to Ala. Code § 22-22A-5(18)c., *as amended*, in determining the amount of any penalty, the Department must give consideration to the seriousness of the violation, including any irreparable harm to the environment and any threat to the health or safety of the public; the standard of care manifested by such person; the economic benefit which delayed compliance may confer upon such person; the nature, extent and degree of success of such person's efforts to minimize or mitigate the effects of such violation upon the environment; such person's history of previous violations; and the ability of such person to pay such penalty. Any civil penalty assessed pursuant to this authority shall not exceed \$25,000.00 for each violation, provided however, that the total penalty

assessed in an order issued by the Department shall not exceed \$250,000.00. Each day such violation continues shall constitute a separate violation. In arriving at this civil penalty, the Department has considered the following:

A. SERIOUSNESS OF THE VIOLATION: Middleton conducted unauthorized open burning. The Department considers the violation to be serious.

B. THE STANDARD OF CARE: There appeared to be no care taken by Middleton to comply with the applicable requirements of the ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)1 and ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)4.

C. ECONOMIC BENEFIT WHICH DELAYED COMPLIANCE MAY HAVE CONFERRED: Middleton likely derived economic benefit by not legally disposing of the materials.

D. EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE OR MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE VIOLATION UPON THE ENVIRONMENT: There were no efforts by Middleton to mitigate possible effects of this violation upon the environment.

E. HISTORY OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS: On August 17, 2017, the Department received a complaint that Middleton was illegally burning a demolished residential structure located at 6440 Alabama Highway 22 North in Valley Grande, Dallas County. On August 17, 2017, Department personnel conducted a complaint investigation of the property and observed unauthorized open burning of housing debris. The Department Inspector informed Middleton of the Open Burning Regulations, gave him a warning notice, and advised him to cease all unauthorized open burning.

F. THE ABILITY TO PAY: Middleton has not alleged an inability to pay the civil penalty.

G. OTHER FACTORS: The Department has carefully considered the six statutory penalty factors enumerated in Ala. Code § 22-22A-5(18)c., *as amended*, as well as the need for timely and effective enforcement, and has concluded that a civil penalty herein is appropriate (*See* “Attachment A”, which is hereby incorporated into these Findings).

ORDER

Based upon the foregoing FINDINGS and pursuant to Ala. Code §§22-22A-5(10), 22-22A-5(12), 22-22-5(18), and 22-28-18, *as amended*, it is hereby ORDERED:

A. That, not later than forty-five days after the issuance of this Order, Middleton shall pay to the Department a civil penalty in the amount of \$3,000.00 for the violations cited herein. Said penalty shall be made payable to the Alabama Department of Environment Management by certified or cashier’s check and shall be submitted to:

Office of General Counsel
Alabama Department of
Environmental Management
P.O. Box 301463
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1463

B. That, immediately upon receipt of this Order and continuing thereafter, Middleton shall ensure immediate and future compliance with ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)1 and ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)4.

C. That, should any provision of this Order be declared by a court of competent jurisdiction or the Environmental Management Commission to be inconsistent with Federal or State law and therefore unenforceable, the remaining provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect.

D. Except as otherwise set forth herein, this Order is not and shall not be interpreted to be a permit or modification of an existing permit under federal, State or local law, and shall not be construed to waive or relieve Middleton of his obligations to comply in the future with any permit or other written direction from the Department.

E. That, issuance of this Administrative Order does not preclude the Department from seeking criminal fines or other appropriate sanctions or relief against Middleton for the violations cited herein.

F. That, failure to comply with the provisions of this Administrative Order shall constitute cause for commencement of legal action by the Department against Middleton for recovery of additional civil penalties, criminal fines, or other appropriate sanctions or relief.

ORDERED and ISSUED this ____ day of _____, 2019.

Lance R. LeFleur, Director
Alabama Department of Environmental
Management
1400 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, Alabama 36110-2059
(334) 271-7700

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Ronald W. Gore, do hereby certify that I have served this Proposed Administrative Order upon the person(s) listed below by sending the same, postage paid, through the United States Mail **91 7199 9991 7037 0309 1640** with instructions to forward and return receipt, to:

Frank Middleton
2975 County Road 44
Selma, Alabama 36701

DONE this the 4th day of June 2019.



Ronald W. Gore
Chief - Air Division
Alabama Department of
Environmental Management

ATTACHMENT A

**Frank Middleton
Selma, Dallas County, AL**

Violation*	Number of Violations*	Seriousness of Violation*	Standard of Care*	History of Previous Violations*	
Illegal open burning	1	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$500	
					Total of Three Factors
TOTAL PER FACTOR		\$1,000	\$1,000	\$500	\$2,500

Adjustments to Amount of Initial Penalty	
Mitigating Factors (-)	
Ability to Pay (-)	
Other Factors (+/-)	
Total Adjustments (+/-) <i>Enter at Right</i>	\$0

Economic Benefit (+)	\$500
Amount of Initial Penalty	\$3,000
Total Adjustments (+/-)	\$0
FINAL PENALTY	\$3,000.00

Footnotes

* See the "Department's Findings" portion of the Order for a detailed description of each violation and the penalty factors.