

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF:)
)
WLT, LLC)
Midland City, Dale County, Alabama)

****Proposed****
ADMINISTRATIVE
ORDER NO: 20-__-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. WLT, LLC (hereinafter, “WLT”) is a timber company operating in and around Dale County, Alabama.
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)2 states that "...open burning must be at least 500 feet from the nearest occupied dwelling other than a dwelling located on the property on which the burning is conducted."

6. On July 2, 2019, the Department received a complaint of unauthorized open burning being conducted on property located at 13535 US-231 in Midland City, Dale County, Alabama (hereinafter, the "Site").

7. During a complaint investigation on July 10, 2019, Department personnel observed several large piles of smoking imported vegetation at the Site. While onsite, the Department inspector met with Mr. Dennis Mathews (property owner) and a WLT crew supervisor who was provided a copy of the regulations. Mr. Mathews informed the Department Inspector that WLT was paying him to dispose of vegetative debris on his property and WLT was responsible for the burning.

8. On August 22, 2019, the Department issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) to WLT and requested a written response on or before September 27, 2019.

9. On September 10, 2019, the Department received the requested response to the NOV. In the response, WLT admitted to importing and burning vegetation from right of way clearing.

10. The Department has a history with WLT in that on September 26, 2018, Department personnel conducted a complaint investigation of unauthorized open burning of imported vegetation by WLT on property located at 114 Grandview Lane in Geneva, Geneva County, Alabama. During a phone conversation on September 27, 2018, Department personnel informed Jordan Maynor, WLT project supervisor, to cease all

unauthorized burning of imported vegetation and discussed the open burning regulations with him.

11. 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:** WLT conducted unauthorized open burning of imported vegetation after being warned. The Department considers the violation to be serious.

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

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

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

E. HISTORY OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS: As described in paragraph 10 above the Department has previously investigated a complaint against WLT and given it a warning concerning unauthorized open burning.

F. THE ABILITY TO PAY: WLT 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, WLT shall pay to the Department a civil penalty in the amount of \$2,000.00 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, WLT shall ensure immediate and future compliance with ADEM Admin. Codes r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)1 and 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)2 .

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 WLT of its 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 WLT for the violation 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 WLT 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 0284 1840** with instructions to forward and return receipt, to:

WLT, LLC
Attention: Mr. Charlie Ward
PO Box 407
Evergreen, Alabama 36401

DONE this the 29th day of October, 2019.



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

ATTACHMENT A

WLT, LLC
Midland City, Dale County, AL

Violation*	Number of Violations*	Seriousness of Violation*	Standard of Care*	History of Previous Violations*	
Illegal open burning	1	\$1,000	\$500	\$250	
					Total of Three Factors
<i>TOTAL PER FACTOR</i>		<i>\$1,000</i>	<i>\$500</i>	<i>\$250</i>	<i>\$1,750</i>

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

Economic Benefit (+)	\$250
Amount of Initial Penalty	\$2,000
Total Adjustments (+/-)	\$0
FINAL PENALTY	\$2,000.00

Footnotes

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