

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF: )
Pruet Production Company ) CONSENT ORDER NO. XX-XXX-CAP
Conecuh County )
ADEM Air Facility ID No. 103-0011 )

PREAMBLE

This Special Order by Consent is made and entered into by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (the "Department" or "ADEM") and Pruet Production Company (the "Permittee") 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, and the regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.

STIPULATIONS

- 1. The Permittee operates Oil and Gas wells located in Conecuh County, Alabama, and in connection therewith, has engaged a third party, Gas Processors, Inc., to own and operate a Gas Processing Plant ("Area 1 Gas Plant) to process gas associated with such Oil and Gas Wells (ADEM Air Facility ID No. 103-0011).
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. The Permittee operates Oil and Gas Wells at the Area 1 Field and through a third party, Gas Processors, Inc., a Gas Processing Plant pursuant to the authority of Major Source

Operating Permit No. 103-0011 (the "Permit"). This Consent Order addresses compliance with the Permit and Regulations regarding operation of the Area 1 Gas Plant.

5. Proviso No. 12 of the Permit states in part: "A compliance certification shall be submitted annually on, or before September 30."

6. Proviso No. 33 of the Permit covers: "Compliance Assurance Monitoring (CAM) to include (a) Operation of Approved Monitoring and (c) Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements" for the Inlet Compressors.

DEPARTMENT'S CONTENTIONS

7. On August 12, 2020, the Department conducted unannounced inspections of the Area 1 Field gas and oil wells and the Area 1 Gas Plant.

8. On August 19, 2020, the Department followed up with the Permittee via electronic mail and requested records to verify information from the inspections conducted on August 12, 2020. Permittee provided records to the Department the same day and the Department discovered that information concerning CAM monitoring requirements for the Area 1 Gas Plant was missing and/or not in a suitable form for review.

9. On August 27, 2020, the Department requested the additional CAM records via electronic mail and the Permittee responded the same day. Permittee stated that it was following up on the Department's request and that some of the requested data was not available due to a software update that occurred June 12, 2019 that resulted in changed data recording capabilities and had not been resolved.

10. On October 1, 2020, the Department mailed a Letter of Inquiry to the Permittee to ascertain what data was available concerning the Inlet Compressors' Catalyst Bed Pressure and Temperature as required by CAM and the Permittee's plan moving forward.

11. In a letter dated October 21, 2020, the Permittee responded to the Letter of Inquiry and stated the following:

(a) It had not established a pressure drop range during performance testing as required by the Permit. The Permittee had recorded weekly pressure drops as required by the Permit but had not used the data to monitor compliance as required by the Permit.

(b) It failed to record 15-minute spot readings of the temperature drop across the catalyst bed as required by the Permit.

(c) It failed to record the 4-hour rolling average temperature drop across the catalyst bed for Inlet Compressor No. 4 for July 2019, August 2019, September 2019, and October 1 – 13, 2019.

12. On November 30, 2020, the Department issued a Notice of Violation to the Permittee for the following:

(a) Certifying Compliance on its 2018 – 2019 Annual Compliance Certification when it was not in compliance with the CAM regulations.

(b) Losing the required data concerning Temperature Drop across the Catalyst Beds of the Inlet Compressors.

(c) Failing to compare recorded pressure drop data to established ranges as required by the Permit.

(d) Submitting the 2019 – 2020 Annual Compliance Certification late.

13. On December 29, 2020, the Permittee responded to the Notice of Violation, stating the following:

(a) It has through its third party contractor, Gas Processors, Inc., instituted new practices, training, and alarms to address the issues surrounding the CAM requirements in the Permit to ensure that the Responsible Official is fully and timely informed of any issues that pertain to compliance with Permit requirements.

(b) Multiple advanced notice processes have been established in-house and with its third party contractor, Gas Processors, Inc., and its permitting consultant to ensure timely and accurate submission of future Annual Compliance Certifications.

14. 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:** The Department considers the Permittee's failure to accurately certify the 2018 – 2019 Annual Compliance Certification, the failure to follow the CAM requirements in the Permit, and the late submittal of the 2019 – 2020 Annual Compliance Certification to be serious violations. However, the Department is not aware of any irreparable harm to the environment resulting from this violation.

B. **THE STANDARD OF CARE:** The Permittee failed to exhibit a sufficient standard of care by failing to follow multiple requirements in the Permit.

C. **ECONOMIC BENEFIT WHICH DELAYED COMPLIANCE MAY HAVE CONFERRED:** The Department is not aware of any evidence indicating that the Permittee received any significant economic benefit from these violations.

D. **EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE OR MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE VIOLATION UPON THE ENVIRONMENT:** The Department is not aware of any efforts by the Permittee to minimize or mitigate the effects of these violations on the environment.

E. HISTORY OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS: The Department's records indicate that there are no other similar violations or enforcement actions taken by the Department against the Permittee within the past five years.

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

G. OTHER FACTORS: It should be noted that this Special Order by Consent is a negotiated settlement and, therefore, the Department has compromised the amount of the penalty in this matter in the spirit of cooperation and the desire to resolve this matter amicably, without incurring the unwarranted expense of litigation.

15. 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, based upon the foregoing and attached contentions, has concluded that the civil penalty herein is appropriate (*See* "Attachment A", which is hereby made a part of the Department's Contentions).

16. The Department neither admits nor denies Permittee's Contentions, which are set forth below. The Department has agreed to the terms of this Consent Order in an effort to resolve the alleged violations cited herein without the unwarranted expenditure of State resources in further prosecuting the above violations. The Department has determined that the terms contemplated in this Consent Order are in the best interests of the citizens of Alabama.

PERMITTEE'S CONTENTIONS

17. The Permittee neither admits nor denies the Department's Contentions. The Permittee consents to abide by the terms of this Consent Order and to pay the civil penalty assessed herein.

18. Permittee has instituted policies and procedures with its third party contractor, Gas Processors, Inc., and with its permitting consultant, Tom Joiner & Associates, Inc., to insure strict and timely compliance with its permit so as to avoid future violations as cited in this Consent Order.

Furthermore, according to the Department, the violations cited in this Consent Order did not cause any irreparable harm to the environment, there is no evidence of Permittee receiving any significant economic benefit from said violations, and there are no other similar violations or enforcement actions taken against the Permittee within the past five years.

ORDER

THEREFORE, the Permittee, along with the Department, desires to resolve and settle the compliance issues cited above. The Department has carefully considered the facts available to it and has considered the six penalty factors enumerated in Ala. Code § 22-22A-5(18)c., *as amended*, as well as the need for timely and effective enforcement, and the Department has determined that the following conditions are appropriate to address the violations alleged herein. Therefore, the Department and the Permittee agree to enter into this Consent Order with the following terms and conditions:

A. The Permittee agrees to pay to the Department a civil penalty in the amount of \$40,000.00 in settlement of the violations alleged herein within forty-five days from the effective date of this Consent Order. Failure to pay the civil penalty within forty-five days from the effective date may result in the Department's filing a civil action in the Circuit Court of Montgomery County to recover the civil penalty.

B. The Permittee agrees that all penalties due pursuant to this Consent Order shall be made payable to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management by certified or cashier's check and shall be remitted to:

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

C. The Permittee agrees to comply with all requirements of ADEM Administrative Code div. 335-3 and the Permit immediately upon the effective date of this Order and every day thereafter.

D. The parties agree that this Consent Order shall apply to and be binding upon both parties, their directors, officers, and all persons or entities acting under or for them. Each signatory to this Consent Order certifies that he or she is fully authorized by the party he or she represents to enter into the terms and conditions of this Consent Order, to execute the Consent Order on behalf of the party represented, and to legally bind such party.

E. The parties agree that, subject to the terms of these presents and subject to provisions otherwise provided by statute, this Consent Order is intended to operate as a full resolution of the violations which are cited in this Consent Order.

F. The Permittee agrees that it is not relieved from any liability if it fails to comply with any provision of this Consent Order.

G. For purposes of this Consent Order only, the Permittee agrees that the Department may properly bring an action to compel compliance with the terms and conditions contained herein in the Circuit Court of Montgomery County. The Permittee also agrees that in any action brought by the Department to compel compliance with the terms of this Agreement, the Permittee shall be limited to the defenses of *Force Majeure*, compliance with this Agreement and physical impossibility. A *Force Majeure* is defined as any event arising from causes that are not foreseeable and are beyond the reasonable control of the Permittee, including its contractors and consultants, which could not be overcome by due diligence (i.e., causes which could have been overcome or avoided by the exercise of due diligence will not be considered to have been beyond the reasonable control of the Permittee) and which delays or prevents performance by a date required by the Consent Order. Events such as unanticipated or increased costs of performance, changed economic circumstances, normal precipitation events, or failure to obtain federal, state, or local permits shall not constitute *Force Majeure*. Any request for a modification of a deadline must be accompanied by the reasons (including documentation) for each extension and the proposed extension time. This information shall be submitted to the Department a minimum of ten working days prior to the original anticipated completion date. If the Department, after review of the extension request, finds

the work was delayed because of conditions beyond the control and without the fault of the Permittee, the Department may extend the time as justified by the circumstances. The Department may also grant any other additional time extension as justified by the circumstances, but it is not obligated to do so.

H. The Department and the Permittee agree that the sole purpose of this Consent Order is to resolve and dispose of all allegations and contentions stated herein concerning the factual circumstances referenced herein. Should additional facts and circumstances be discovered in the future concerning the Area 1 Gas Plant which would constitute possible violations not addressed in this Consent Order, then such future violations may be addressed in Orders as may be issued by the Director, litigation initiated by the Department, or such other enforcement action as may be appropriate, and the Permittee shall not object to such future orders, litigation or enforcement action based on the issuance of this Consent Order if future orders, litigation or other enforcement action address new matters not raised in this Consent Order.

I. The Department and the Permittee agree that this Consent Order shall be considered final and effective immediately upon signature of all parties. This Consent Order shall not be appealable, and the Permittee does hereby waive any hearing on the terms and conditions of same.

J. The Department and the Permittee agree that this Order shall not affect the Permittee's obligation to comply with any Federal, State, or local laws or regulations.

K. The Department and the Permittee agree that final approval and entry into this Order are subject to the requirements that the Department give notice of proposed Orders to the public, and that the public have at least thirty days within which to comment on the Order.

L. The Department and the Permittee agree 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.



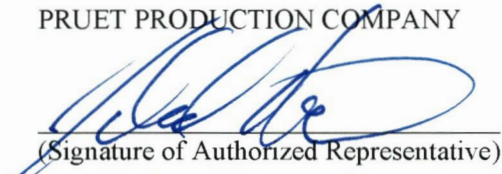
M. The Department and the Permittee agree that any modifications of this Order must be agreed to in writing signed by both parties.

N. The Department and the Permittee agree that, 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 the Permittee of its obligations to comply in the future with any permit.

Executed in duplicate, with each part being an original.

PRUET PRODUCTION COMPANY

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

  
(Signature of Authorized Representative)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lance R. LeFleur  
Director

J. David Hilton  
(Printed Name)

Vice President - Production  
(Printed Title)

Date Signed: 2/18/21

Date Executed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attachment A**

**Pruet Production Company  
Conecuh County**

**ADEM Air Facility ID No. 103-0011**

<b>Violation*</b>	<b>Number of Violations*</b>	<b>Seriousness of Violation*</b>	<b>Standard of Care*</b>	<b>History of Previous Violations*</b>	<b>Total of Three Factors</b>
Failure to accurately certify Annual Compliance Certification	1	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00		\$20,000.00
Failure to follow CAM requirements	2	\$15,000.00	\$10,000.00		\$25,000.00
Late Submittal of Annual Compliance Certification	1	\$3,000.00	\$2,000.00		\$5,000.00
<b>TOTAL PER FACTOR</b>		<b>\$28,000.00</b>	<b>\$22,000.00</b>		<b>\$50,000.00</b>

<b>Adjustments to Amount of Initial Penalty</b>	
<b>Mitigating Factors (-)</b>	
<b>Ability to Pay (-)</b>	
<b>Other Factors (+/-)</b>	<b>-\$10,000.00</b>
<b>Total Adjustments (+/-)</b>	<b>-\$10,000.00</b>

<b>Economic Benefit (+)</b>	
<b>Amount of Initial Penalty</b>	\$50,000.00
<b>Total Adjustments (+/-)</b>	-\$10,000.00
<b>FINAL PENALTY</b>	<b>\$40,000.00</b>

Footnotes

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