

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF:)
)
Gary Swords and Swords Services, LLC)
Crossville, Marshall County, Alabama)

PROPOSED
ADMINISTRATIVE
ORDER NO: 22-XXX-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. Gary Swords owns and operates Swords Services, LLC (hereinafter, “Swords”) from property he owns in his individual name located at 125 Swords Lane in Crossville, Marshall County, Alabama (hereinafter, the “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 June 22, 2021, the Department received a complaint of unauthorized open burning imported vegetation being conducted at the Site.

7. On July 27, 2021, Department personnel conducted an investigation of the Site and observed evidence of unauthorized open burning of imported vegetation and regulated materials.

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 violations, 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:** Swords conducted unauthorized open burning of imported vegetation and various refuse after being previously warned by the Department. The Department considers this violation to be serious.

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

C. **ECONOMIC BENEFIT WHICH DELAYED COMPLIANCE MAY HAVE CONFERRED:** Swords likely derived an economic benefit by not legally disposing of the imported vegetation and refuse.

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

E. **HISTORY OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS:** On May 27, 2020, the Department issued a Warning Letter to Swords regarding unauthorized open burning. In the June 13, 2020 response, Swords stated that he understood the Department's regulations in regards to open burning and had discontinued unauthorized open burning. On September 17, 2020, Department personnel conducted a second complaint investigation of the Site and observed additional evidence of unauthorized open burning of numerous piles of imported vegetation and prohibited materials. On January 29, 2021, the Department issued Administrative Order No. 21-027-AP to Swords. On July 12, 2021, the Department mailed Swords a delinquent letter requesting payment no later than August 2, 2021. As of

this date, the Department has not received the \$2,000 monetary penalty associated with the Administrative Order.

F. THE ABILITY TO PAY: Swords 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, Swords shall pay to the Department a civil penalty in the amount of \$10,000.00 for the violation cited herein. Said penalty shall be made payable to the Alabama Department of Environmental 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, Swords shall ensure immediate and future compliance with ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)1 and 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 Swords 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 Swords 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 Swords for recovery of additional civil penalties, criminal fines, or other appropriate sanctions or relief.

ORDERED and ISSUED this ____ day of _____, 2021.

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 **9489 0090 0027 6294 8944 68** with instructions to forward and return receipt, to:

Swords Services, LLC
Attention: Garry Swords
125 Swords Lane
Crossville, Alabama 35962

DONE this the 13th day of October, 2021.



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

ATTACHMENT A

Gary Swords and Swords Services, LLC
Crossville, Marshall County, AL

Violation*	Number of Violations*	Seriousness of Violation*	Standard of Care*	History of Previous Violations*	
Unauthorized open burning	1	\$4,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	
					Total of Three Factors
<i>TOTAL PER FACTOR</i>		<i>\$4,000</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>	<i>\$8,000</i>

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

Economic Benefit (+)	\$2,000
Amount of Initial Penalty	\$10,000
Total Adjustments (+/-)	\$0
FINAL PENALTY	\$10,000.00

Footnotes

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