

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
 )  
Unison Environmental Services, LLC )  
Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama )

PROPOSED  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
ORDER NO: 21-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 (“Department” or “ADEM”) Administrative Code of Regulations (“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. Unison Environmental Services, LLC (“Unison”) owns/ operates Cypress Creek Landfill located at 6315 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama (“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 May 22, 2021, the Department was informed of a large fire occurring at the Cypress Creek Landfill. On May 23, 2021, the Department received an email from Unison stating that various local fire departments were on Site in response to the fire. The Department received multiple complaints regarding the fire.

7. On June 16, 2021, the Department issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) to Unison regarding the unauthorized open burning. The NOV was returned to the Department on July 12, 2021, as undeliverable. The Department emailed the issued NOV to Unison on July 26, 2021, and requested that a written response to the NOV be submitted to the Department no later than August 16, 2021.

8. In the August 25, 2021 response to the NOV, Unison stated that approximately 800-1000 cubic yards of construction/demolition waste debris burned in the fire.

9. 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

violations 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: Unison failed to prevent unauthorized open burning of regulated waste. The Department considers this violation to be serious.

B. THE STANDARD OF CARE: There appeared to be no care taken by Unison 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 at the time of the violation.

C. ECONOMIC BENEFIT WHICH DELAYED COMPLIANCE MAY HAVE CONFERRED: Unison did not likely derive an economic benefit due to the unauthorized open burning.

D. EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE OR MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE VIOLATION UPON THE ENVIRONMENT: Some efforts were made by Unison to mitigate possible effects of this violation upon the environment at the time the violation occurred.

E. HISTORY OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS: In October 2015, the Department received multiple complaints regarding unauthorized open burning occurring at the Site. On November 19, 2015, the Department conducted a complaint investigation and confirmed the occurrence of an accidental fire.

F. THE ABILITY TO PAY: Unison 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, Unison shall pay to the Department a civil penalty in the amount of \$6,000.00 for the violation 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, Unison shall ensure immediate and future compliance with ADEM Admin. Code rs. 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 Unison 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 Unison 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 Unison for recovery of additional civil penalties, criminal fines, or other appropriate sanctions or relief.

ORDERED and ISSUED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2021.

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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 51** with instructions to forward and return receipt, to:

Unison Environmental Services, LLC  
Attention: Mr. Knox Horner  
6315 12<sup>th</sup> Ave E  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35406

DONE this the 13<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2021.



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

## ATTACHMENT A

### Unison Environmental Services, LLC Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, AL

Violation*	Number of Violations*	Seriousness of Violation*	Standard of Care*	History of Previous Violations*	
Unauthorized open burning	1	\$4,000	\$1,000	\$1,000	
					<b>Total of Three Factors</b>
<b>TOTAL PER FACTOR</b>		<b>\$4,000</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$6,000</b>

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

Economic Benefit (+)	\$0
Amount of Initial Penalty	\$6,000
Total Adjustments (+/-)	\$0
<b>FINAL PENALTY</b>	<b>\$6,000.00</b>

Footnotes

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