

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF:)
Joshua and Amy Harris)
Fairhope, Baldwin 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 (“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. Joshua and Amy Harris (“Harris”) own/ operate a landscaping company from and own real property located at 19550 Lawrence Road in Fairhope, Baldwin County, Alabama (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)2 states that "the location of the burning must be at least 500 feet from the nearest occupied dwelling other than a dwelling located on the property which the burning is conducted.

6. 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."

7. On November 1, 2021, the Department received a complaint regarding unauthorized open burning being conducted at the Site on a regular basis.

8. On November 2, 2021, the Department conducted an inspection of the Site and observed an un-burned pile of various regulated materials. The Department gave Harris a copy of the open burning regulations and discussed them.

9. On November 8, 2021, the Department conducted a follow up inspection of the Site and observed unauthorized open burning of various regulated materials. The Department advised Harris to cease all unauthorized open burning.

10. On March 14, 2022, the Department received a complaint regarding unauthorized open burning of pallets and other regulated wastes being conducted at the Site.

11. On March 11 and April 2, 2022, Harris posted photos on social media of unauthorized open burning being conducted at the Site.

12. 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:** Harris conducted unauthorized open burning of pallets and various regulated materials after being advised of the open burning regulations by the Department. The Department considers these violations to be serious.

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

C. **ECONOMIC BENEFIT WHICH DELAYED COMPLIANCE MAY HAVE CONFERRED:** Harris likely derived an 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 Harris to mitigate possible effects of these violations upon the environment at the time the violations occurred.

E. HISTORY OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS: Harris has no previous history with the Department for violating the Open Burning regulations.

F. THE ABILITY TO PAY: Harris 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, Harris shall pay to the Department a civil penalty in the amount of \$4,000.00 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, Harris shall ensure immediate and future compliance with ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01.

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 Harris of their 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 Harris 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 Harris for recovery of additional civil penalties, criminal fines, or other appropriate sanctions or relief.

ORDERED and ISSUED this _____ day of _____, 2022.

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 9248 37** with instructions to forward and return receipt, to:

Joshua and Amy Harris
19550 Lawrence Road
Fairhope, AL 36532

DONE this the 27th day of June, 2022.



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

ATTACHMENT A

Joshua and Amy Harris
Fairhope, Baldwin County, AL

Violation*	Number of Violations*	Seriousness of Violation*	Standard of Care*	History of Previous Violations*	
Unauthorized open burning	2	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$0	
					Total of Three Factors
TOTAL PER FACTOR		\$2,000	\$1,000	\$0	\$3,000

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

Economic Benefit (+)	\$1,000
Amount of Initial Penalty	\$4,000
Total Adjustments (+/-)	\$0
FINAL PENALTY	\$4,000.00

Footnotes

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