

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF)	
)	
)	
HANS, LLC)	CONSENT ORDER 25-???-CLD
SOUTH LAKE SUBDIVISION)	
AUBURN, LEE COUNTY, ALABAMA)	
NPDES ALR10C2QJ)	
)	

PREAMBLE

This Special Order by Consent is made and entered into by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (hereinafter "Department" or "ADEM") and Hans, LLC (hereinafter "Operator") pursuant to the provisions of the Alabama Environmental Management Act, Ala. Code §§ 22-22A-1 to 22-22A-16, as amended, the Alabama Water Pollution Control Act (hereinafter "AWPCA"), Ala. Code §§ 22-22-1 to 22-22-14, as amended, and the regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, and § 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1342, as amended.

STIPULATIONS

1. The Operator is a Limited Liability Company (LLC) registered with the Alabama Secretary of State's Office. Chao Han is listed with the Alabama Secretary of State's Office as a member and registered agent for the LLC responsible for the Operator's compliance with State and federal environmental laws and regulations. The Operator is constructing a residential subdivision at the South Lake Subdivision (hereinafter "Facility") located in T19N, R27E, S16, S Uniroyal Road in the city of Auburn, Lee County, Alabama.

2. The following references and acronyms are used in this Consent Order and, when used, shall have the meaning of the name or title referenced below.

BMPs	Best Management Practices
CBMPP	Construction Best Management Practices Plan
GP	ADEM NPDES General Permit ALR100000
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOV	Notice of Violation
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NTUs	Nephelometric Turbidity Units

QCI	Qualified Credentialed Inspector
QCP	ADEM-recognized Qualified Credentialed Professional
SPCC	Spill Prevention Control & Countermeasures
UT	Unnamed Tributary
WL	Warning Letter

3. Sediment (settleable, suspended, and turbid solids) and other pollutants in stormwater runoff from the Facility have the potential to discharge and/or have discharged to UT to Halawakee Creek, a water of the State.

4. The Department is a duly constituted department of the State of Alabama pursuant to Ala. Code §§ 22-22A-1 to 22-22A-16, as amended.

5. Pursuant to Ala. Code § 22-22A-4(n), as amended, the Department is the state agency responsible for the promulgation and enforcement of water pollution control regulations in accordance with the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1251 to 1387, as amended. In addition, the Department is authorized to administer and enforce the provisions of the AWPCA, Ala. Code §§ 22-22-1 to 22-22-14, as amended.

6. The Department granted authorization ALR10C2QJ to the Operator on August 3, 2022. The GP will expire on March 31, 2026.

7. Pursuant to Part III. A. of the GP, the Operator shall design, install and maintain effective erosion controls and sediment controls, appropriate for site conditions. Sediment control measures, erosion control measures, and other site management practices must be properly selected based on site-specific conditions, must meet or exceed the technical standards outlined in the Alabama Handbook (defined in Part V. of the GP), and the site-specific CBMPP prepared in accordance with Part III. E. of the GP.

8. Pursuant to Part III. A. 14(b) of the GP, sediment control measures, erosion control measures, and other site management practices shall be designed and maintained to minimize erosion and maximize sediment removal resulting from a two (2) year, twenty-four (24) hour storm event.

9. Pursuant to Part III. E. of the GP, construction activity may not commence until a CBMPP has been prepared in a format acceptable to the Department and certified by a QCP as adequate to

meet the requirements of the GP. The Operator shall properly implement and regularly maintain the controls, practices, devices, and measures specified in the CBMPP.

10. Pursuant to Part III. I. 3. of the GP, the Operator shall promptly take all reasonable steps to remove, to the maximum extent practical, pollutants deposited offsite or in any waterbody or stormwater conveyance structure.

11. During an inspection of the Facility on March 14, 2024, the Department observed and documented that the Operator had not properly implemented and maintained effective BMPs in violation of Part III. A. of the GP resulting in discharges of sediment and other pollutants to waters of the State.

12. In addition, during the March 14, 2024, inspection, accumulations of sediment resulting from discharges at the Facility were observed and documented by the Department, offsite and in a UT to Halawakee Creek, a water of the State, in violation of Part III. I. 3. of the GP.

13. Pursuant to Part I. C. of the GP, discharges where the turbidity of such discharge will cause or contribute to a substantial visible contrast with the natural appearance of the receiving water are prohibited.

14. On April 8, 2024, an NOV was sent to the Operator by the Department as a result of the March 14, 2024, inspection. The NOV notified the Operator of deficiencies documented at the Facility and required the Operator to submit to the Department within ten (10) days of receipt of the NOV, a written report prepared and certified by a QCP that all deficiencies at the Facility had been corrected. The NOV required documentation that a site assessment had been conducted of all existing BMPs and that said BMPs are sufficiently designed and properly implemented and maintained to prevent and/or minimize erosion and to maximize sediment removal resulting from a two (2) year, twenty-four (24) hour precipitation event, and to prevent pollution to the maximum extent practicable from leaving the site, entering offsite conveyances, and/or discharging into affected State waters, in accordance with the requirements of the GP and the Alabama Handbook. The NOV also required monthly submittal of reports for all comprehensive inspections conducted at the Facility for 365 days after the date of issuance.

15. As of October 20, 2024, the information and certification requested in the April 8, 2024, NOV had not been submitted to the Department.

16. The Operator violated Ala. Code § 22-22-9(e), as amended, by failing to respond to the April 8, 2024, NOV within the specified timeframe.

17. During an inspection of the Facility on October 21, 2024, the Department observed and documented that the Operator had not properly implemented and maintained effective BMPs in violation of Part III. A. of the GP resulting in discharges of sediment and other pollutants to waters of the State.

18. In addition, during the October 21, 2024, inspection, accumulations of sediment resulting from discharges at the Facility were observed and documented by the Department, offsite and in a UT to Halawakee Creek, a water of the State, in violation of Part III. I. 3. of the GP.

19. On January 23, 2025, an NOV was sent to the Operator by the Department as a result of the October 21, 2024, inspection. The NOV notified the Operator of deficiencies documented at the Facility and required the Operator to submit to the Department within ten (10) days of receipt of the NOV, a written report prepared and certified by a QCP that all deficiencies at the Facility had been corrected. The NOV required documentation that a site assessment had been conducted of all existing BMPs and that said BMPs are sufficiently designed and properly implemented and maintained to prevent and/or minimize erosion and to maximize sediment removal resulting from a two (2) year, twenty-four (24) hour precipitation event, and to prevent pollution to the maximum extent practicable from leaving the site, entering offsite conveyances, and/or discharging into affected State waters, in accordance with the requirements of the GP and the Alabama Handbook. The NOV also required monthly submittal of reports for all comprehensive inspections conducted at the Facility for 365 days after the date of issuance.

20. As of March 5, 2025, the information and certification requested in the January 23, 2025, NOV had not been submitted to the Department.

21. Ala. Code § 22-22-9(e), as amended, requires an operator to respond within the specified time frame to a notice of violation or non-compliance by the Department.

22. The Operator violated Ala. Code § 22-22-9(e), as amended, by failing to respond to the January 23, 2025, NOV within the specified timeframe.

23. The Operator neither admits nor denies the Department's allegations. The Operator consents to abide by the terms of the following Consent Order and to pay the civil penalty assessed herein.

CONTENTIONS

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. Pursuant to Ala. Code § 22-22A-5(18)(c), as amended, 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 VIOLATIONS: Considering the general nature of the violations, the seriousness of the violations, their effects, if any on impaired waters, and any available evidence of harm to the environment or threat to the public, the Department determined the base penalty to be \$24,000.

B. THE STANDARD OF CARE: In considering the standard of care manifested by the Operator, the Department noted that effective BMPs had not fully been implemented and regularly maintained and that the standard of care taken by the Operator was not commensurate with the applicable regulatory requirements. Therefore, the Department enhanced the penalty by an additional \$4,000.

C. ECONOMIC BENEFIT WHICH DELAYED COMPLIANCE MAY HAVE CONFERRED: The Operator has delayed certain costs associated with implementing and maintaining effective BMPs. In consideration of the economic benefit to the Operator, the Department enhanced the penalty by an additional \$1,800.

D. EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE OR MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE VIOLATIONS UPON THE ENVIRONMENT: The Department is unaware of any efforts by the Operator to minimize or mitigate the effects of the violations upon the environment.

E. HISTORY OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS: The Department has not documented previous violations by the Operator at this Facility. However, the Department believes the base penalty is sufficient to address this factor.

F. THE ABILITY TO PAY: The Department is unaware of any evidence regarding the Operator's inability to pay the civil penalty.

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

H. The civil penalty is summarized in Attachment 1.

ORDER

Therefore, the Operator, along with the Department, desires to resolve and settle the compliance issues cited above. The Department has carefully considered the facts available to the Department and has considered the six (6) penalty factors enumerated in Ala. Code § 22-22A-5(18)(c), as amended, as well as the need for timely and effective enforcement.

The Department believes that the following conditions are appropriate to address the violations alleged herein. Therefore, the Department and the Operator agree to enter into this Consent Order with the following terms and conditions:

A. The Operator agrees to pay to the Department a civil penalty in the amount of \$20,000 in settlement of the violations alleged herein. The Operator and the Department agree that the administrative penalty assessed herein shall be paid by the Operator to the Department according to the schedule in the

table below. The Operator agrees that, in the event the Operator fails to comply with any of the requirements of this Consent Order within the time provided, the remainder of the full assessed civil penalty shall become immediately due and payable.

Payment #	Amount	Due Date
1	\$1,300	August 1, 2025
2	\$1,700	September 1, 2025
3	\$1,700	October 1, 2025
4	\$1,700	November 1, 2025
5	\$1,700	December 1, 2025
6	\$1,700	January 1, 2026
7	\$1,700	February 1, 2026
8	\$1,700	March 1, 2026
9	\$1,700	April 1, 2026
10	\$1,700	May 1, 2026
11	\$1,700	June 1, 2026
12	\$1,700	July 1, 2026
TOTAL	\$20,000	

B. The Operator 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
PO Box 301463
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1463

C. The Operator agrees, immediately upon the effective date of this Consent Order and continuing thereafter, to ensure immediate and future compliance with the AWPCA, applicable ADEM regulations, and all NPDES permit limitations, terms, and conditions for all ADEM NPDES regulated sites/facilities disturbed, operated, owned, and/or controlled by the Operator or responsible officials of the Operator, except as may be provided otherwise by an ADEM-accepted compliance schedule contained in this Consent Order or any other Order executed or issued by the Department.

D. The Operator agrees, immediately upon the date of issuance of this Consent Order and continuing thereafter, to fully implement and maintain temporary BMPs to prevent/minimize to the maximum extent practicable noncompliant and/or unpermitted discharges of pollutants to waters of the State.

E. The Operator agrees to submit any application, plan, information, report, or other submittal required by this Consent Order to:

Office of Field Services
Field Operations Division
Alabama Department of Environmental Management
PO Box 301463
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1463

F. The Operator agrees, within five (5) days of the receipt of any written comments from the Department, to modify in writing any application, plan, information, report, or other submittal, and submit additional written information/clarification to the Department to address any comments made by the Department.

G. The Operator agrees, within five (5) days after the date of issuance of this Consent Order, to have a comprehensive inspection conducted of the Facility, offsite conveyances, and affected State waters.

H. The Operator agrees, within ten (10) days after the date of issuance of this Consent Order, to submit to the Department a CBMPP detailing effective BMPs to be implemented to prevent/minimize to the maximum extent practicable sediment/solids and other pollutants in stormwater leaving the Facility, and to ensure full compliance with the requirements of the GP.

I. The Operator agrees, within ten (10) days after the date of issuance of this Consent Order, to submit to the Department a detailed sediment/solids loss analysis and plan for the removal, remediation, and/or mitigation of any sediment/solids and other pollutants from the Facility deposited offsite and in State waters.

J. The Operator agrees to begin the implementation of the plan for the removal, remediation, and/or mitigation of any sediment/solids and other pollutants from the Facility deposited offsite and in State waters within five (5) days of being notified of the Department's acceptance of the plan.

K. The Operator agrees, within twenty (20) days after the date of issuance of this Consent Order, to fully implement and maintain effective BMPs, implement all plans required by this Consent Order, and correct all deficiencies at the Facility, offsite conveyances, and affected State waters, including sediment/solids removal, remediation, and/or mitigation. The BMPs shall meet or exceed the technical standards outlined in the Alabama Handbook, the site CBMPP plan, and the GP.

L. The Operator agrees, within twenty-five (25) days after the date of issuance of this Consent Order, to submit to the Department certification with photo-documentation that effective BMPs have been implemented, all deficiencies have been corrected, and full compliance with the requirements of the GP has been achieved at the Facility, offsite conveyances, and affected State waters, including sediment/solids removal, remediation, and/or mitigation.

M. The Operator agrees, that immediately upon receipt of this Consent Order and continuing thereafter, the Operator will ensure immediate and future compliance with the AWPCA, applicable ADEM regulations, and all NPDES permit limitations, terms, and conditions for all ADEM NPDES regulated sites/facilities disturbed, operated, owned, and/or controlled by the Operator or responsible officials of the Operator, except as may be provided otherwise by an ADEM-accepted compliance schedule contained in this Consent Order or any other Order executed or issued by the Department.

N. The Department and the Operator (hereinafter "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.

O. 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.

P. The Operator agrees that the Operator is not relieved from any liability if the Operator fails to comply with any provision of this Consent Order.

Q. For purposes of this Consent Order only, the Operator 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 Operator also agrees that in any action brought by the Department to compel compliance with the terms of this Agreement, the Operator 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 Operator, including the Operator's 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 Operator) 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 (10) 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 Operator, 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 the Department is not obligated to do so.

R. The Parties 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 Facility 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 Operator 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.

S. The Parties 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 Operator does hereby waive any hearing on the terms and conditions of the same.

T. The Parties agree that this Consent Order does not preclude, negate, or otherwise affect the Operator's obligation or liability to comply with any Federal, State or local laws, regulations, or permit requirements.

U. The Parties agree that final approval and entry into this Consent Order are subject to the requirements that the Department give notice of proposed penalty orders to the public, and that the public have at least thirty (30) days within which to comment on the Consent Order.

V. The Parties agree that, should any provision of this Consent 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 herein shall remain in full force and effect.

W. The Parties agree that, except as otherwise set forth herein, this Consent 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 Operator of the Operator's obligations to comply in the future with any permit coverage.

X. The Parties agree that any modifications of this Consent Order must be agreed to in writing and signed by both parties.

Executed in duplicate with each part being an original.

HANS, LLC

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



(Signature of Authorized Representative)

Lance R. LeFleur, Director

Chao Han
(Print Name of Authorized Representative)

Date Signed: _____

owner
Title

Date Signed: 5/8/2025

ATTACHMENT 1 - PENALTY SYNOPSIS

HANS, LLC - SOUTH LAKE SUBDIVISION

Opelika, Lee County NPDES ALR10C2QJ

Violation	Number of Violations	Seriousness of Violation & Base Penalty*	Standard of Care*	History of Previous Violations*
Effective Best Management Practices (BMPs) not implemented and/or maintained	2	\$9,000	\$1,500	
Discharge and/or accumulation of solids/sediment offsite and/or in State waters	2	\$15,000	\$2,500	
Totals:	4	\$24,000	\$4,000	
Economic Benefit*:				\$1,800
Sub-Total:				\$29,800
Mitigating Factors*:				
Ability to Pay*:				
Other Factors*:				
Amount of Initial Penalty:				\$29,800
Total Adjustments:				-\$9,800
Final Penalty:				\$20,000

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