

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF:)
Jason Seales) PROPOSED
Sterrett, Shelby County, Alabama) ADMINISTRATIVE
ORDER NO: 26-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. Jason Seales (Seales) owns two parcels of real property located on Alabama Highway 25, Sterrett, Shelby County, Alabama. The Parcel Number associated with Site 1 is 04 6 14 0 001 041.000 and the Parcel Number associated with Site 2 is 04 6 14 0 001 041.001.

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 (AAPCA), Ala. Code §§ 22-28-1 to 22-28-23, as amended.

4. ADEM Admin. Code chap. 335-3-3 sets forth the requirements, limitations and exceptions regarding open burning.

5. ADEM Admin Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b) limits open burning as authorized by 335-3-3-.01(2)(a) to certain conditions, including:

- a. The burning must take place on the property on which the combustible fuel originates [335-3-3-.01(2)(b)(1)];
- b. The fire shall be attended at all times [335-3-3-.01(2)(b)(7)].

6. On October 23, 2025, the Department received a complaint referencing unauthorized open burning of imported vegetation at Site 2. During a November 5, 2025 site inspection, Department personnel observed unauthorized burning at Site 1 and advised site personnel of applicable open burning regulations and provided contact information and asked for Seales to contact the Department by phone. During a subsequent phone conversation with Department personnel, Seales stated no burning would take place on the property.

7. The Department received a second complaint on March 20, 2026, of unauthorized open burning at Site 2. During a March 26, 2026 inspection of Site 1, Department personnel observed evidence of burning imported vegetation, some of which was still smoldering. During this inspection, Seales stated that squatters had started the fire, but he again committed to extinguishing the fire.

8. A third complaint of unauthorized open burning of imported vegetation at Site 2 was received on March 27, 2026, from Shelby County Environmental Services (SCES). SCES provided the Department with documentation of active burning of imported

vegetative waste at Site 2, following complaints from six individual residents. Evidence obtained on March 27, 2026, including eyewitness accounts, photographs, and aerial photographs, confirmed that Seales was personally present and supervised the disposal of waste via unauthorized burning.

8. Seales conducted unauthorized open burning at the Site, in violation of ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01 and the AAPCA.

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:** As of March 27, Seales continues to conduct unauthorized open burning of imported vegetation. The Department considers these violations to be serious.

B. **THE STANDARD OF CARE:** There appeared to be no care taken by Seales to comply with the applicable requirements of the ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01 and

the AAPCA. Seales continued to conduct unauthorized open burning after being warned by Department personnel in 2025.

C. ECONOMIC BENEFIT WHICH DELAYED COMPLIANCE MAY HAVE CONFERRED: The Department has determined that Seales likely derived economic benefit by not properly disposing of the imported vegetation waste.

D. EFFORTS TO MINIMIZE OR MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE VIOLATION UPON THE ENVIRONMENT: There were no efforts by Seales to mitigate possible effects of these violations upon the environment at the time of the violations.

E. HISTORY OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS: The Department verified that unauthorized open burning occurred at Site 1 during a complaint investigation on November 5, 2025, and explained the open burning regulations to him during a phone call.

F. THE ABILITY TO PAY: Seales 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, Seales shall pay to the Department a civil penalty in the amount of \$27,000.00 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, Seales shall ensure immediate and future compliance with ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01 and the AAPCA.

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

ORDERED and ISSUED this _____ day of _____, 2026

Edward F. Poolos, Director
Alabama Department of Environmental
Management
1400 Coliseum Boulevard
Montgomery, Alabama 36110-2059
(334) 271-7700

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Aubrey H. White III, 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 **9589 0710 5270 3494 4620 92** with instructions to forward and return receipt, to:

Jason Seales
51311 Hwy 25
Sterrett, Alabama 35147

DONE this the 4th day of MAY, 2026.



Aubrey H. White III
Chief - Air Division
Alabama Department of
Environmental Management

ATTACHMENT A

Jason Seales
Sterrett, Shelby County, AL

Violation*	Number of Violations*	Seriousness of Violation*	Standard of Care*	History of Previous Violations*	
Unauthorized open burning	2 days	\$12,000	\$9,000	\$2,000	
					Total of Three Factors
TOTAL PER FACTOR		\$12,000	\$9,000	\$2,000	\$23,000

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

Economic Benefit (+)	\$4,000
Amount of Initial Penalty	\$23,000
Total Adjustments (+/-)	\$0
FINAL PENALTY	\$27,000.00

Footnotes

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