



Linda S. Adams
Secretary for
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California Regional Water Quality Control Board North Coast Region

Geoffrey M. Hales, Acting Chairman

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Arnold
Schwarzenegger
Governor

December 24, 2009

Mr. Antonio Andrade
401 West Mill Street
Ukiah, CA 95482-5435

Dear Mr. Andrade:

Subject: Response to Email of December 3, 2009

File: Masonite Corporation, 300 Ford Road, Ukiah, California
Case No. 1NMC042

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board received a copy of your December 3, 2009 email to Messrs. Gonzalez, Morley and Brown, and Dr. Trotter regarding the contamination and remediation process at the Masonite site in Ukiah. I have been asked to prepare a reply addressing the concerns expressed in that email.

I summarized your concerns and provided responses following each summary. Please contact me if you do not think that your concerns were adequately summarized or addressed.

1. COUNTY OVERSIGHT

Comment: "All activities on the property must comply with County rules and regulations."

Response: The Regional Water Board agrees that the property owner must ensure that all applicable local, State, and federal requirements are met. Regional Water Board concurrence with any workplan proposed by the property owner does not abrogate the responsibility of the property owner to obtain applicable permits, approvals, and permissions required by other regulatory authorities.

2. BURIED BARRELS

Comment: "There continues to be ongoing charges in our community that there are barrels of buried toxics on the property."

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Recycled Paper

Response: The claims about buried wastes have to be more specific regarding location in order to investigate them. This site is so complex that it was subdivided into 14 areas of concern based on past operations and disposal practices. It is not economically or technically feasible to require the property owner to drill in every possible burial location without more precise information. If the members of the community that are making those claims could be more specific with regard to the possible location the charges can be investigated. In the on-going investigation process or during future development activities, however, characterization and remediation will be required if buried wastes are discovered. Also, if additional contamination is discovered in the future, the site can be re-opened to regulatory oversight based on the new information regardless of the status of the site at that time.

3. HVOC PLUME

Comment: “There is a contaminated well on the site that no one has been able to determine the source of the contamination.”

Response: As explained in the Regional Water Board March 13, 2009 letter to you, a supply well in the southeastern section of the site has been impacted by low levels of chlorinated solvents. The source of this impact has been identified as the historical use and storage of chlorinated solvents for a particular manufacturing operation (the spline-siding line) located near the southern end of the main manufacturing facility. The extent of the groundwater contamination has been investigated, and this groundwater contamination is addressed in the August 21, 2006 Remedial Action Plan, in the section entitled “HVOC Area” (HVOC is an acronym that stands for halogenated volatile organic compounds, a term that includes chlorinated solvents).

4. SOIL PROPERTIES

Comment: “Soil continues to be moved from the property yet that soil has never been tested for the chemicals that were used in the manufacturing process.”

Comment: “Furthermore, if the NCRWQCB is only requiring testing for petrochemicals and now Dioxin (due to members of the public pointing out the necessity of doing do). They have not looked into testing for other chemicals used in the manufacturing process and chemical byproducts of the manufacturing process at the site.”

Comment: “Now this is identified as contaminated soil, the magnitude of the tested for contamination is unknown to either NCRWQCB or the County. When I asked NCRWQCB staff about the potential hazards of human contact with that soil, staff member Woodhouse stated that she could not confirm if that would be problematic and is now going back to her reports to make that determination.”

Response: As described in the Regional Water Board March 13, 2009 letter to you, Regional Water Board staff are familiar with practices at mill sites and other sites owned by Masonite within the North Coast Region. Staff have reviewed the history and nature of chemical uses at the site, and required the appropriate testing. Staff also reviewed the past infractions and violations of the California Water Code and incorporated any area of concern into the site investigation. Additionally, the Regional Water Board investigation included reviewing the Mendocino County Environmental Health files for the site in February 2002. Hundreds of soil and groundwater analyses have been performed at the site to investigate contamination. The investigations have focused on areas of known releases, areas of potential releases, and on groundwater screening. Due to the complexity of the site and the time period over which investigations have occurred, there is not a single document that lists all of the chemicals that have been tested on the site, so if there are specific chemicals that are of interest to you, please provide a list of those chemicals to this office and we will evaluate the site characterization reports to determine whether further testing is needed.

5. BIOREMEDIATION

Comment: “In 2008, NCRWQCB determined that just from the trace elements they tested for on the property, the pond areas needed to bio-remediate.”

Response: It is not clear what is meant by the comment concerning “trace elements.” However, the Regional Water Board did not determine that the pond areas required bioremediation. The Regional Water Board concurred with a proposal by the property owners that bioremediation was an acceptable method to abate the contamination in the ponds, particularly the hydrocarbon contamination, which is the main contaminant of concern in this area. Tests have shown some detections of polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PNAs). Most, not all, of the PNA concentrations were below applicable screening levels. In order for the Regional Water Board to concur with the bioremediation activity, the property owners submitted a Report of Waste Discharge under the conditions of North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Order No. 92-66, *General Waste Discharge*

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Requirements for Soil Bioremediation and/or Aeration Activities. The property owners were required to describe: the volume of soil to be treated, the characterization of the contamination, the treatment system, among other requirements. Notice of the proposed bioremediation was published in both the local newspaper and on the Regional Water Board website.

Comment: “Rather than let the process continue for fall-winter 2009 and 2010 (which would have required the owners to winterize the two ponds), the owners solicited a land fill that would accept the contaminated soil. It is NCRWQCB’s point of view that this movement of contaminated soil is between the owners, the County, and the land fill accepting the soil.”

Response: The bioremediation process resulted in a decrease of the petroleum hydrocarbon contamination that was present in the pond sediments. The property owners decided to remove much of the remediated sediments and found a permitted land disposal facility that was able to accept the material. In order for a land disposal facility to accept material, it must be assured that the material is characterized and appropriate for that site. Land disposal facilities require chemical characterization before accepting wastes and often perform independent, confirmatory analyses in their own laboratories. Some of the remediated sediments remain at the ponds and are winterized.

Comment: “It is my further understanding that the owners now want to grade and level the ponds where these soils/wood chips have been removed. However, the NCRWQCB required that there be 4 core samples taken from the pond liners, which the owners complied with. Upon review of the core samples, NCRWQCB staff found the testing done not sensitive enough and has ordered further testing.”

Response: The contents of former stormwater Ponds 10 and 11 were moved to Pond 9 for bioremediation treatment. The remaining material at the bottom of Ponds 10 and 11 – the liners – were tested for petroleum hydrocarbons and PNAs. The report of that testing was submitted to the Regional Water Board in October 2009. The number of samples that were analyzed and reported was eight samples from each pond. The reported concentration of petroleum hydrocarbons was below the level of concern in the liners. It was not possible to make a determination about the concentrations (if any) of remaining PNAs as the detection level of the analytical screening test was not low enough to make a determination about whether the liners could be safely left in place. The property owners were notified of this in a letter dated November 19, 2009 and I was told that additional, more sensitive, analyses will be performed.

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6. SITE REMEDIATION PROCESS

Comment: “What these activities highlight is the breakdown of the remediation process required by NCRWQCB and oversight of the implementation of the remediation process by the owner on site“.

Response: It is not clear what is meant by this comment. If you have specific questions about the Regional Water Board site remediation process, I can provide you with a specific response. As described in the Regional Water Board March 13, 2009 letter to you, Regional Water Board staff use the State Water Resources Control Board Resolution No. 92-49, entitled “Policies and Procedures for Investigation and Cleanup and Abatement of Discharges under Water Code Section 13304,” to guide site investigations and cleanup. This resolution is available on-line at:
http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/1992/rs1992_0049.shtml. A copy can be provided upon request. The general process is a phased, iterative approach consisting of the following steps:

- Site investigation and characterization,
- Interim remedial actions for source removal,
- Development of cleanup alternatives and selection of a remedial action,
- Preparation of a Remedial Action Plan,
- Implementation of the Remedial Action Plan,
- Confirmatory sampling and verification monitoring, and
- Site closure.

On a site as complex as this site, the different areas of concern will undergo the site investigation and cleanup process at different rates. Also, on a complex site, interim remedial actions often lead to additional site investigation and characterization, and confirmatory sampling may lead to additional remedial action development.

If you have any questions, please contact me at cwoodhouse@waterboards.ca.gov or at (707) 576-2701.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Caryn Woodhouse
Staff Environmental Scientist

California Environmental Protection Agency

cc: Mr. Christopher Brown, Air Pollution Control Officer, Mendocino County Air Quality Management District, 306 Gobbi Street, Ukiah, CA 95482
 Mr. Nash Gonzalez, Planning and Building Services Director, 501 Low Gap Road, Room 1440, Ukiah, CA 95482
 Mr. John Morely, Mendocino County Environmental Health Division, 501 Low Gap Rd, Room 1326, Ukiah, CA 95482
 Dr. Marvin Trotter, Mendocino County Health Officer, 1120 Dora Street, Ukiah, CA 95482
 Mr. Jeff Adams, Developers Diversified Realty, 1401 Willow Pass Road, Suite 850, Concord, CA 94520
 Ms. Carmel Angelo, Director, Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency, 1120 S. Dora St., Ukiah, CA 95482
 Mr. Phil Baldwin, Mayor, City of Ukiah, c/o City Clerk's Office, 300 Seminary Avenue, Ukiah, CA 95482
 Mr. James C. Camp, McKenna Long & Aldridge, 300 South Grand Ave, 14th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90071-3124
 Mr. Mathew Clark, Masonite Corporation, 1 N Dale Mabry Hwy, Suite 950, Tampa, FL 33609
 Ms. Ellen Faulkner, PO Box 351, Redwood Valley, CA 95470
 Mr. Tyler Griffith, URS Corporation, Century Square, 1501 4th Avenue, Suite 1400, Seattle, WA 98101-1616
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 Mr. Stephen Knuttel, SCS Engineers, 3843 Brickway Blvd, Suite 208, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-8226
 Ms. Pinky Kushner, 504 N. Oak Street, #1, Ukiah, CA 95482
 Mr. Tom Mitchell, CEO, County of Mendocino, 501 Low Gap Road, Room 1010, Ukiah, CA 95482
 Mr. James R. Rabe, Masonite Corporation, 1955 Powis Road, West Chicago, IL 60185
 Mr. Thomas C. Richardson, International Paper, 6400 Poplar Avenue, Memphis, TN, 38197
 Mr. Charles Sawyer and Mrs. Nancy Sawyer, 1305 Rafello Dr., Ukiah, CA 95482
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