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Air Quality Division  
Detroit Office

September 19, 2019

Jonathan Lamb, Senior Environmental Quality Analyst  
Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)  
Air Quality Division (AQD)  
3058 W. Grand Boulevard  
Suite 2-300  
Detroit, MI 48202-6058

**RE: EQ Detroit, Inc. (DBA US Ecology – Detroit South) – Response to Violation Notice dated September 9, 2019 for Alleged Nuisance Odors on August 27, 2019 and August 28, 2019**

Dear Mr. Lamb:

Please accept this letter as US Ecology – Detroit South’s (USE-DS) response to the Violation Notice (VN) dated September 9, 2019, regarding odors allegedly caused by USE-DS’s operations in violation of PTI No. 269-04H; General Condition 6 and R336.1901(b) on August 27 and August 28, 2019. The letter stated that inspections conducted by EGLE-AQD in response to complaints reportedly found a moderate to strong (level 3 and 4), persistent lime dust and chemical-type odor attributable to USE-DS’s operations, impacting areas downwind of the facility.

This recent letter is the first odor VN that USE-DS has received since September of 2018. Therefore, it has almost been a year since the last odor VN. In the past year, USE-DS hired a consultant (RWDI Consulting Engineers out of Winsor, ON) to conduct an odor survey to help inform the company’s assessment of odors that may be associated with its operations. The consultant’s efforts cost approximately \$39,000. Additionally, several meetings took place between EGLE and USE-DS to discuss the consultant’s odor survey prior to and following the survey. Lastly, the results of the odor survey and a letter outlining potential improvement projects were submitted to EGLE’s attention on May 29, 2019. In summary, this letter is the first VN the facility has received in almost a year; however, the company has continued to work cooperatively throughout that one-year

period with EGLE staff to help both sides better understand the facts and circumstances that may affect the facility's operations and EGLE's interpretation of what constitutes an odor event that would be considered "unreasonable."

With respect to the specific events referenced in the VN, a resident contacted me regarding odors from the facility at approximately 6:30pm on August 28, 2019. I immediately drove to the resident's home and met with them outside for about an hour. Except for two nonconsecutive periods lasting for approximately a minute each time, there were no odors present. During the intermittent moments odor was detectible, it was brief and not at a level that would unreasonably interfere with one's enjoyment of their property. I left the resident's home and received a call shortly after, at approximately 8:15pm, from EGLE concerning odors at the same resident's home. I returned to the resident's home a half hour later and drove around the neighborhood for an hour, but I was unable to locate any odor from the facility. The following morning, August 29, 2019, the Operation's Manager and I went to the resident's home from 7:30am to 8:30am but, again, found no odors. It is our understanding that a Level 3 odor is defined as a "distinct and definite objectionable odor" and a Level 4 odor is an "odor strong enough to cause a person to attempt to avoid it completely." I was unable to identify an odor that would meet either of those definitions at the residence of the complainants. Based on the events described above, we would need additional information from EGLE regarding the basis for its finding of a Level 3 or 4 odor and the location of that odor in relation to the residence of the individual claiming to have suffered an unreasonable interference with the use and enjoyment of property.

In response to the August 27, 2019 and August 28, 2019 odor VN, USE-DS also completed a review of the days in question and found that applicable equipment was functioning properly and no unusual odors were identified by personnel proximate to the site. The odors found are typical of the operations at the time of the day that the odor complaints were received. We suspect the weather may have also played a role in making odors more detectable on the days in question. When the humidity is higher, it actually traps the odor and causes it to travel farther and linger longer. Additionally, warmer weather allows the odor receptors in the human nose to work more efficiently. The weather on these two days was hot, humid, and little wind, but despite those conditions we were not able to identify odors matching the description in the VN at the residence of the complainant on the day in question

One of the projects outlined in the "Follow-up to April 26, 2019 Odor Survey Results Meeting" letter submitted to your office on May 29, 2019, was to evaluate Forecast Meteorology software and the possible installation of a meteorological tower on site to work in conjunction with the software. The software would be set up based on the identification of operations which are susceptible to weather. The software would collect current meteorological data and utilize forecast data to predict when odors may

be more prominent and then avoid processing at those times. This project is currently being evaluated for cost and effectiveness.

USE-DS takes odor management very seriously and remains dedicated to its efforts to prevent unreasonable nuisance odors by scrutinizing waste profiles prior to approval, proactively monitoring odors offsite, and continuing routine preventative maintenance on the baghouses. The facility is also diligent in community outreach by encouraging citizens to call and even take tours of the facility in order to understand the company and its goals to be a good community partner.

USE-DS appreciates EGLE's assistance in these efforts by notifying us of potential issues and following-up with investigations. In order to enable USE-DS to respond most effectively to odor concerns, we ask that EGLE continue to notify Raymond Landsberg, General Manager as soon as possible with all essential details when any odor complaint potentially relating to USE-DS is received. This will allow USE-DS to immediately investigate and potentially respond to the complaint and report the results back to EGLE.

If you have questions concerning this response, please feel free to contact me at (313) 347-1300.

Sincerely,



Raymond Landsberg  
General Manager

Enclosures

cc (via email):

Paul Max, City of Detroit, BSEED  
Rich Conforti, EGLE  
Todd Zynda, EGLE  
Mary Ann Dolehanty, EGLE  
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