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October 9, 2020

Jonathan Lamb, Senior Air Quality Analyst
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE)
Air Quality Division
3058 W. Grand Boulevard
Suite 2300
Detroit, MI 48202

RE: EQ Detroit, Inc. (DBA US Ecology – Detroit South) – Response to Violation Notice dated September 17, 2020 for Alleged Nuisance Odors on September 2, 2020

Dear Mr. Lamb:

Please accept this letter as US Ecology – Detroit South's (USE-DS) response to the Violation Notice (VN) dated September 17, 2020, regarding odors allegedly caused by USE-DS's operations in violation of PTI No. 269-04H; General Condition 6 and R336.1901(b) on September 2, 2020. The letter stated that inspections conducted by EGLE-AQD in response to a complaint reportedly found a moderate to strong (level 3 and 4), burnt lime dust and chemical-type odors, attributable to US Ecology's operations, impacting areas downwind of the facility.

In an effort to ensure the public record reflects the history and purpose of the USE-DS facility, a summary is being provided below. Note that the location of the facility has been industrial in nature since 1908. As environmental regulations were developed to address waste from industry, the facility took on the role of managing wastes to support the growing industrial waste management needs of the area.

In 1976 the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) was signed into law to address the increasing issues faced by the country from our growing volume of municipal and industrial waste (including hazardous waste). This law required companies creating waste to manage it correctly. In 1984 the land disposal restrictions (LDR) program was developed as part of the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA) to RCRA to require even more stringent waste treatment standards prior to final disposal. These new laws were created to ensure hazardous and solid waste would be required to meet specific criteria before it can go to the landfill. The USE-DS facility provides this service to a wide variety of industrial, commercial, retail, governmental and municipal customers to ensure their waste streams are managed responsibly and disposed of safely.

Basically, industrial and commercial facilities send their waste to USE-DS to ensure it is managed, stored, treated, and sent for disposal as required by the regulations. Essentially, USE-DS exists because environmental regulations require this type of operation. Industries in the area (that build and create the items we buy and use) as well as commercial and retail sites (where we all purchase our household goods and other items) create solid and hazardous waste. These wastes are created as a byproduct of the items we are all accustomed to having in modern-day society (cars, cell phones, computers, bikes, synthetic materials used for shoes and clothing, hair dye, cleaners, medicine, and any other items in and around homes/businesses). These wastes come to USE-DS to be managed properly to ensure they do not contaminate our air, soil, groundwater, and surface water.

Facility History

The original lot was reportedly purchased by Leonard Reliable Storage from the James Witherell Farm in 1908. The Detroit Foundry Supply occupied the site from 1911 to 1914, and the Whitney Hollinger Company inhabited the site from 1914 to 1925. The Detroit Cleveland Warehouse and Realty Company and Michigan Trust Company were reportedly owners from 1925 to 1929.

Phoenix Wire Works held the property for the longest period from 1927 to 1966. Then the Detroit Rendering Company conducted operations from 1966 to 1982. The Darling Company conducted rendering operations at the site from 1982 to 1984. City Management Corporation (CMC) owned and operated the EQD Detroit facility from 1984 through 1998. USA Waste purchased the facility in January of 1998 and shortly after, it was acquired by US Liquids (USL) in May of 1998. EQ Detroit took over the facility February 2, 2004 and was purchased by US Ecology in 2014 but continues to operate as EQ Detroit, Inc. In summary, the area occupied by the USE-DS facility has been occupied by commercial and industrial uses for more than a century.

Facility Purpose

EQD is a hazardous and non-hazardous waste treatment facility. The EQD operations include receiving, storage, and treatment of hazardous wastes permitted by EGLE under the facility operating license (MID 980 991 566). The routine operations and work areas include:

- Waste receiving and Quality Control (QC);
- Waste loading and unloading;
- Reagent unloading and storage;
- Waste storage in tanks;
- Waste treatment in tanks;
- Container staging/storage; and
- Shipment of wastes off-site to treatment, storage, and disposal facilities (TSDFs).

Non-hazardous wastes are managed in accordance with the Solid Waste Processing and Transfer Facility Operating License issued under Part 115 of Act 451 of 1994, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA).

Response to Violation Notice

A call was received by USE-DS personnel from a local resident at 9:20pm and then from EGLE at 9:40pm on September 2nd informing USE-DS of an odor complaint, a subsequent field investigation took place by EGLE, and the field investigator decided odors were sufficiently intense to support a violation of Rule 901(b). At the time of the complaint, there were no operations taking place. The treatment of a non-hazardous solid waste vault was completed by 6:00pm and the drying of a second non-hazardous solid waste vault was completed by 8:15pm. Based on odor evaluations by personnel on site at the time of the complaint there were no unusual or offensive odors from the process.

Additionally, USE personnel conducted odor evaluations of the neighborhood at approximately 7:00am and 7:30pm (which would have been during the time processing of waste was taking place) and did not identify odors. At the time of the complaint USE-DS personnel checked the inside of the building where waste treatment occurs and found no indications that the treated vaults would be contributing to any current offsite odors. To summarize, a self-initiated neighborhood odor survey conducted while waste treatment was ongoing did not reveal any odors in the surrounding area and an odor survey of the site as well as the conditions inside the treatment building at the time of the odor complaint did not reveal any reason to believe the site would be contributing to offsite odors.

In order to enable USE-DS to respond most effectively to odor concerns, we ask that AQD field personnel make every effort to notify me 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.

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

Sincerely,



John C. Barta
General Manager

cc (via email):

Paul Max, City of Detroit, BSEED
Rich Conforti, EGLE
Todd Zynda, EGLE
Tracy Kecskemeti, EGLE
Greg Morrow, EGLE
Margie Ring, EGLE
Lonnie Lee, EGLE
Jim Day, EGLE
Eduardo Olaguer, EGLE

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