

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

IN THE MATTER OF:)
Astrata Contracting, LLC) PROPOSED
Dadeville, Tallapoosa County, Alabama) CONSENT ORDER NO: 22- -AP

PREAMBLE

This Special Order by Consent is made and entered into by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (hereinafter, "the Department" and/or "ADEM") and Astrata Contracting, LLC, pursuant to the provisions of the Alabama Environmental Management Act, Ala. Code, §§22-22A-1 through 22-22A-17, as amended, the Alabama Air Pollution Control Act, Ala. Code §§22-28-1 to 22-28-23, as amended, and the regulations promulgated pursuant thereto.

- 1. Astrata Contracting, LLC; (hereinafter, "Astrata") is a contracting company located at 9 Old Tree Road in Dadeville, Tallapoosa County, Alabama.
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, Ala. Code §§ 22-28-1 to 22-28-23, as amended.
4. ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)1 states that "...open burning must take place on the property on which the combustible fuel originates."

5. ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)2 states that “The location of the burning must be at least 500 feet from the nearest occupied dwelling other than a dwelling located on the property on which the burning is conducted.”

6. ADEM Admin. Code r. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)4 states that “Only vegetation and untreated wood may be burned. It is unauthorized to open burn heavy oils, asphalt products, plastics, vinyl materials, insulation, paper, cardboard, natural or synthetic rubber, salvage or scrap materials, chemicals, garbage, treated or painted wood, or any trash.”

DEPARTMENT'S CONTENTIONS

7. On December 29, 2021, the Department received a complaint regarding unauthorized open burning being conducted by Astrata.

8. During a January 7, 2022 inspection, Department personnel observed 3 separate burn locations on Astrata property in Dadeville, Tallapoosa County. The burn site located at latitude/ longitude (32.7101, -85.8753) off of McCarty Road was actively smoking and contained vegetation and various regulated materials consisting of, but not limited to metals, plastics, lumber. The Department inspector observed evidence of unauthorized open burning of vegetation within 500 feet of the nearest occupied dwelling other than a dwelling on the property at latitude/ longitude (32.7149, -85.8740) behind the Astrata office and warehouse. Also regulated materials were mixed in with the vegetation in the un-burned portion at this location. Evidence of unauthorized open burning of vegetation and various regulated materials including, but not limited to metals, plastics, and lumber was observed at the burn site located at latitude/ longitude (32.7127, -85.8800) near the subdivision off of Harbor View Boulevard.

9. On January 12, 2022, the Department received an additional complaint regarding continued unauthorized open burning being conducted by Astrata.

10. 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 violation, 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 violation 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:** Astrata conducted unauthorized open burning of imported vegetation and various regulated materials at 3 burn sites after being warned by the Department on multiple occasions. The Department considers these violations to be serious.

B. **THE STANDARD OF CARE:** There appeared to be no care taken by Astrata to comply with the applicable requirements of the ADEM Admin. Code rs. 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)1, 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)2, and 335-3-3-.01(2)(b)4.

C. **ECONOMIC BENEFIT WHICH DELAYED COMPLIANCE MAY HAVE CONFERRED:** Astrata likely derived an economic benefit by not legally disposing of the vegetation and regulated materials.

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

E. HISTORY OF PREVIOUS VIOLATIONS: On November 6, 2018, the Department issued Administrative Order 19-010-AP with a civil penalty in the amount of \$5,000 to Astrata for violating the Department's Open Burning regulations. Since the 2018 Administrative Order, the Department has received numerous complaints regarding continued unauthorized open burning by Astrata. On June 29, 2021, the Department conducted a complaint investigation of Astrata property and observed evidence of unauthorized open burning of various regulated materials. On August 9, 2021, the Department issued a Warning Letter to Astrata regarding the continued unauthorized open burning which requested a written response be submitted to the Department no later than September 10, 2021. In an August 16, 2021 phone conversation with Brian Ray, owner of Astrata, Department personnel discussed the Open Burning Regulations and emphasized that any burning of vegetation must be at least 500 feet from the nearest occupied dwelling other than a dwelling on the property. Department personnel also instructed Astrata to submit the requested written response to the August 9, 2021 letter. As of this date, the Department has not received the requested written response.

F. THE ABILITY TO PAY: Astrata alleged an inability to pay the civil penalty as proposed. After submitting financial records and other documentation the Department has agreed to reduce the penalty as shown herein.

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 Contentions).

11. The Department neither admits nor denies Astrata’s contentions, which are set forth below. The Department has agreed to the terms of this Consent Order in an effort to resolve the alleged violations cited herein without unwarranted expenditure of State resources in prosecuting the above violations. The Department has determined that the terms contemplated in this Consent Order are in the best interests of the citizens of Alabama.

ASTRATA’S CONTENTIONS

12. Astrata neither admits nor denies the Department’s contentions. Astrata consents to abide by the terms of this Consent Order and pay the civil penalty assessed herein.

ORDER

THEREFORE, Astrata, along with the Department, desires to resolve and settle the compliance issues cited above. The Department has carefully considered the facts available to it and has considered the six 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 determined that the following conditions are appropriate to address the violations alleged herein. Therefore, the Department and Astrata agree to enter into this Consent Order with the following terms and conditions:

- A. Astrata agrees to pay the Department a civil penalty in the amount of \$7, 500.00 in settlement of the violations alleged herein. Said penalty to paid as follows: One thousand five hundred (\$1,500.00) within forty-five days from the date of issuance of this Consent Order and One Thousand (\$1,000.00) every 30 days thereafter until paid in full. Failure to pay the civil penalty within the specified timeframe after the issuance of this Consent Order may result in the Department filing a civil action in the Circuit Court of Montgomery County to recover the unpaid civil penalty.
- B. Astrata agrees to install measures (Including gates, cameras, posted signs, and fencing) to keep unauthorized persons from entering the sites within ninety (90) days and to send a report to the Department of the installation.
- C. Astrata 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
P.O. Box 301463
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1463

D. Astrata agrees that it, immediately upon the effective date of this Consent Order and continuing thereafter, will not conduct or facilitate open burning for any reason, whatsoever.

E. The 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.

F. 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 alleged violations and/or deviations which are cited in this Consent Order.

G. Astrata agrees that it is not relieved from any liability if it fails to comply with any provision of this Consent Order.

H. For purposes of this Consent Order only, Astrata 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. Innovative also agrees that in any action brought by the Department to compel compliance with the terms of this Agreement, Astrata 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 Astrata, including his 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 Astrata) and which delays or prevents performance by a date required by the Consent Order. Events such as unanticipated or increase 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 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 Astrata, 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 it is not obligated to do so.

I. The Department and Astrata 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 reference herein. Should additional facts and circumstances be discovered in the future concerning illegal open burning 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 Innovative 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 addresses new matters not raised in this Consent Order.

J. The Department and Astrata agree that this Consent Order shall be considered final and effective immediately upon the signature of all parties. This Consent Order shall not be appealable, and Astrata does hereby waive any hearing on the terms and conditions of the same.

K. The Department and Astrata agree that this Order shall not affect its obligation to comply with any Federal, State, or local laws or regulations.

L. The Department and Astrata agree that final approval and entry into this Order are subject to the requirements that the Department give notice of proposed Orders to the public, and that the public have at least thirty days within which to comment on the Order.

M. The Department and Astrata agree 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.


N. The Department and Astrata agree that any modifications of this Order must be agreed to in writing signed by both parties.

O. The Department and Astrata agree that, 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 Astrata of its obligations to comply in the future with any permit.

Executed in duplicate, with each part being an original.

ASTRATA CONTRACTING, LLC

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



(Signature of Authorized Representative)

Lance R. LeFleur
Director

BRIAN RAY

(Printed Name)

Managing Member

(Printed Title)

4-20-22

(Date)

(Date Executed)

ATTACHMENT A

**Astrata Contracting, LLC
Dadeville, Tallapoosa County**

| Violation* | Number of Violations* | Seriousness of Violation* | Standard of Care* | History of Previous Violations* | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Unauthorized open burning | 3 | \$12,000 | \$3,000 | \$5,000 | |
| | | | | | Total of Three Factors |
| <i>TOTAL PER FACTOR</i> | | <i>\$12,000</i> | <i>\$3,000</i> | <i>\$5000</i> | <i>\$20,000</i> |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Adjustments to Amount of Initial Penalty | |
| Mitigating Factors (-) | |
| Ability to Pay (-) | |
| Other Factors (+/-) | <\$17,500> |
| Total Adjustments (+/-) <i>Enter at Right</i> | <\$17,500> |

| | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Economic Benefit (+) | \$5,000 |
| Amount of Initial Penalty | \$25,000 |
| Total Adjustments (+/-) | <\$17,500> |
| FINAL PENALTY | \$7,500.00 |

Footnotes

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