

Essroc Cement Company to Pay \$1.7 Million Penalty to Resolve Clean Air Act Violations

Article By:

EPA

\$33 million investment in pollution controls to reduce smog and asthma causing emissions by more than 7,000 tons per year

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that Essroc Cement Company has agreed to pay a \$1.7 million penalty and invest approximately \$33 million in pollution control technology to resolve alleged violations of the **Clean Air Act** (CAA) at six of its Portland Cement manufacturing plants. The settlement will protect Americans' health by reducing more than 7,000 tons of harmful nitrogen oxides (NOx) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂) pollution each year that can lead to childhood asthma, acid rain, and smog. Essroc has also agreed to spend \$745,000 to mitigate the effects of past excess emissions from its facilities.

"EPA is committed to cutting illegal air pollution from the largest sources of emissions," said Cynthia Giles, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. "The pollution controls required by today's settlement will reduce harmful air pollutants, protecting communities across the nation."

"These comprehensive measures at multiple Essroc facilities will achieve substantial reductions in harmful air pollution and result in cleaner, healthier air for many people across the country," said Ignacia S. Moreno, assistant attorney general for the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice. "This will bring Essroc into compliance with the nation's Clean Air Act and marks significant progress in addressing the nation's largest sources of air pollution, and protecting the most vulnerable among us, especially children and the elderly, from respiratory and other health problems."

Under the settlement, Essroc will install state of the art pollution control technology to control SO₂ and NOx at five of its plants and demonstrate a selective catalytic reduction system (SCR) system at two long wet kilns in its Logansport, Ind. plant. If successful, this will be the first SCRs used on long wet kilns anywhere in the world. Essroc will also permanently retire its sixth plant, located in Bessemer, Penn. This plant is currently out of operation and its permanent retirement will ensure that the facility does not restart without proper permitting under the CAA.

The settlement also requires Essroc to spend \$745,000 on a mitigation project to replace old engines

in several off-road vehicles at its plant sites. The replacement engines are estimated to achieve approximately a 50-80 percent reduction in nitrogen oxides in each engine.

Reducing air pollution from cement plants is one of EPA's National Enforcement Initiatives for 2011-2013. Sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides, two key pollutants emitted from cement plants, have numerous adverse effects on human health and are significant contributors to acid rain, smog, and haze. The pollutants are converted in the air into fine particles of particulate matter that can cause severe respiratory and cardiovascular impacts, and premature death. Reducing these harmful air pollutants will benefit the communities located near the Essroc plants, particularly communities disproportionately impacted by environmental risks and vulnerable populations, including children.

The states of Indiana and West Virginia, and the Commonwealths of Pennsylvania and Puerto Rico, are also signatories to this consent decree.

The settlement was lodged today in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania, and is subject to a 30-day public comment period and final court approval.

More information on the settlement: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/cases/civil/caa/essroc.html>

More about EPA's National Enforcement Initiatives: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/data/planning/initiatives/index.htm>

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