



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4
ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303-8960

AUG 06 2012

Mr. Keith C. Silverman
Vice President, Operations and Environmental Health and Safety
Ashland Inc.
1313 N. Market Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19894

Re: Conditional Approval of Phase II Sampling and Analysis Work Plan
RCRA 3013(a) Administrative Order, Docket No. RCRA-04-2011-4251
Hercules Inc., Hattiesburg, MS
MSD 008 182 081

Dear Mr. Silverman:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) have reviewed the final revisions to the Phase II Sampling and Analysis Work Plan (Phase II SAWP), submitted by Hercules, Inc. (Hercules) pursuant to the May 9, 2011, RCRA 3013(a) Administrative Order (AO). We have determined that this revised version of the Phase II SAWP addresses most of the previously identified issues, except for the constituents of concern (COCs).

Therefore, the revised Phase II SAWP, dated July 20, 2012, is conditionally approved, except for the following component:

Section 4.0 – Preliminary Constituents of Concern

The EPA will continue to work with Hercules to determine the COCs for this project and will approve a revised COC list upon our review of the Phase I data.

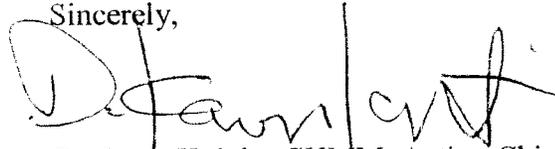
General Comment:

The EPA would like to emphasize that throughout this AO investigation, a full characterization of the potential contaminants and migration pathways present at the Hercules site, including a comprehensive analysis of surface and subsurface characteristics and potential receptor populations, is of paramount concern. As such, we will be evaluating the data for representativeness and accuracy in accordance with previous correspondence to Hercules, particularly the EPA June 15, 2012, groundwater investigation comments. The quality of the data and the timeliness of the analysis and submittal of such data is also a priority for both the EPA and MDEQ. The EPA and MDEQ will be overseeing the work performed by Hercules and its consultant(s) to ensure that all approved protocols are followed and that data are submitted in a timely manner in accordance with the EPA Region 4 electronic data delivery policy (Exhibit 5 to the AO). Lastly, consistent with the AO, the EPA requires that laboratory detection limits be equal to or less than the most up-to-date Regional Screening Levels (RSLs) or Mississippi Target Remediation Goals (TRGs) for all COCs, and that all laboratory and sampling procedures should be in compliance with approved EPA protocols.

In accordance with Paragraphs 77 and 92 of the AO, Hercules shall begin implementation of the approved Phase II SAWP within fifteen (15) calendar days of this letter. Noncompliance with the conditionally approved Phase II Work Plan, or the schedule of implementation, shall constitute noncompliance with the AO, and the provisions of Section XXIV of the AO may be enforced by the EPA.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and diligence during this process. Please contact myself at 404-562-8885, or by email at knight.karen@epa.gov, if you have any programmatic questions, or Meredith Anderson, Sr. Corrective Action Project Manager, at 404-562-8608, or by email at anderson.meredith@epa.gov, if you have specific technical questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Knight', written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

D. Karen Knight, CHMM, Acting Chief
RUST Branch
RCRA Division

cc: Melissa Collier, MDEQ
John Ellis, Arcadis
Tim Hassett, Ashland/Hercules
Willie McKercher, MDEQ
Chris Sanders, MDEQ
Rick Sumrall, MDEQ
Chris Wells, MDEQ