

10/11/2023

Bill and Patty Slocumb
Georgia Residents
9520 Old Preserve Trail
Ball Ground, Georgia 30107

SUBJECT: Forsyth County – Eagle Point Landfill
Permit Number: 058-012D (MSWL)
Response to Comments Vertical and Horizontal Expansion

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Slocumb:

In accordance with the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) public participation policy, the permit for Eagle Point Municipal Solid Waste Landfill (EPLF) to expand vertically and horizontally was posted on EPD's website on August 21, 2023. The issuance of the permit by the Director initiated an appeal period specified by Ga. Comp. R. and Regs. Chapter 391-1-2, available at <http://rules.sos.state.ga.us/gac/>, which remained open until September 21, 2023 (30 days).

EPD received comments from you on or about September 18, 2023. The comment letter requested a direct response to four (4) comments. In addition to the comments provided on September 18, 2023, truGround Environmental, LLC (truGround) requested information on June 22, 2017, and July 27, 2018, regarding the proposed site limitations for the landfill expansion. This request for information was addressed in a Response to Siting Comments issued upon finalization of site suitability conditions on February 23, 2018. For your reference, the February 23, 2018, Response to Siting Comments is attached to this letter. A third letter from truGround dated February 5, 2019, raised concerns regarding high infiltration into the EPLF, its long-term stability, and lack of odor control. EPLF's measures implemented to address these concerns are described below in EPD's response No. 5.

1. Comment: Is expanding the current site closer to the Etowah River suitable?

EPD Response: Georgia's Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (Chapter 391-3-16-.01) specify certain minimum protection criteria for water supply watersheds. Within seven (7) miles upstream of a governmentally owned public drinking water supply intake, no impervious surface (e.g., a landfill liner) may be constructed within 150 feet of either side of a stream bank. The setback is reduced to 75 feet if more than seven miles upstream of the intake. EPLF is greater than seven miles upstream from the nearest intake and its impervious liner system is 600 feet from the Etowah River. EPLF meets State rules on siting near rivers used for drinking water.

Cherokee County Water & Sewage Authority (CCWSA) continuously monitors and tests water quality at, and upstream of, the intake points and to the EPD's knowledge has not found indications of water quality impairment attributable to EPLF.

2. Comment: *Why would an alternative design that DOES NOT include modular block retaining walls, that can be prone to failure, supporting cells and drainage structures directly upslope of the river be required by the EPD? Just because the math works out from an engineering standpoint doesn't mean the current solution is appropriate due to the potential horrific environmental disaster that could occur in the event of a wall failure. In the event there is a failure your approval to allow the expansion to continue will be brought into question.*

EPD Response: The Mechanically Stabilized Engineered (MSE) walls provide a means to increase the disposal capacity of the existing landfill within the permitted footprint. Provisions of the EPLF permit regarding the safeguards of the MSE walls include professional engineering design and construction, as well as inspections and maintenance during the operating life and the post-closure care period of EPLF to ensure that the MSE walls continue to function as designed and constructed. MSE walls have been permitted and constructed at other landfill facilities throughout the state.

3. Comment: *Have the existing wetlands downslope of the current stormwater ponds been tested for contaminants? During periods of extended heavy rainfall, the current ponds have been known to overflow directly into those wetlands degrading the aquatic ecosystem and the basin as a whole containing threatened species.*

EPD Response: A stormwater release event occurred in May 2018. This event was addressed in the combined Consent Order EPD-SW-2819, EPD-WP-8620, and EPD-AQC-6945. The conditions of this consent order have been satisfied and the alleged violations listed in the order are resolved.

EPLF has approved environmental monitoring networks designed to detect the release of contaminants, at the relevant point of compliance, in both the uppermost aquifer and surface waters from the site. Currently, EPLF is in compliance for both groundwater and surface water monitoring requirements. There have been no confirmed releases, above applicable regulatory thresholds, at this landfill since the 2018 release event.

EPD does not have a regulatory basis for requiring testing of the wetlands in proximity to the landfill at this time.

4. Comment: *What assurances do we have that the previous slope stability problems have been permanently resolved and what management practices will be monitored continuously by EPD to prevent future failures?*

EPD Response: A slope instability event, observed in May of 2018, was addressed in the combined CO. As stated above, the conditions of this consent order have been satisfied.

EPLF begun monitoring and reporting high moisture content waste disposal rates, leachate

collection system inspections and maintenance, caisson well installation and extension, visual inspections of potential surface expressions of unstable areas, and water levels within the landfill in the first quarter of 2019. As a provision of the EPLF permit, monitoring and reporting of these landfill conditions will continue through the operating life and post-closure care period to ensure that potential stability issues are promptly identified and mitigated.

5. *Response to truGround letter dated February 5, 2019.*

Instead of the common practice of placing twelve inches of soil on areas of the site that are not currently accepting waste, EPLF installs temporary exposed geomembrane covers as an alternative. These plastic covers significantly reduce infiltration into the waste mass, as they remain impermeable and relatively intact as waste settles and decomposes. The same mechanisms that limit rainwater infiltration into the waste retain landfill gases within the waste mass until removed by the gas control and collection system. EPLF has full time staff responsible for operating and maintaining the gas control and collection system, which aided by the exposed geomembrane covers, limits odor releases from the landfill.

Additionally, EPLF has instituted operational measures to mitigate odor releases, such as limiting the size of the working face, installing and operating an odor control curtain, and implementing an odor monitoring/complaint response procedure to address citizens' concerns in the vicinity of the landfill.

Sincerely,



William Cook
Program Manager
Solid Waste Management Program

Attachment: Response to Siting Comments dated February 23, 2018.

cc: Hon. Raphael Warnock, U.S. Senate
Hon. Jon Ossoff, U.S. Senate
Robin Leigh, Office of the Attorney General Chris Carr
Jeffrey W. Cown, Director
Charles J. Mueller, Land Protection Branch Chief
Sarah Visser, Land Protection Assistant Branch Chief
Keith Stevens, Solid Waste Permitting Unit Manager