

ATTACHMENT 2:

Response to Comments - Hazardous Waste Facility Permit HW-107(D)

Comment 1:

EPD should expand the monitoring schedule as described in the sampling plan to monitor twice a year every year, rather than once a year in even-numbered years and twice a year in odd-numbered years.

EPD Response:

Increased monitoring would not more quickly identify issues at this site. 10 years of groundwater data and groundwater modeling indicate that contaminant concentrations are decreasing, and that groundwater is moving slowly. Any increase in contamination would most likely be detected in the upgradient source areas (with a travel time of over a year) before migrating downgradient to the sentinel wells. It takes an additional 3-4 years for groundwater to move from the sentinel monitoring wells (MW-66, MW-67, and MW-68) to the property boundary. This timeframe would allow detection of increased contamination to be identified and addressed within the existing sampling schedule. No changes were made to the permit based on this comment.

Comment 2:

Four (4) monitoring events in the proposed three-year life of the permit does not seem sufficient for developing the necessary data trends to determine the effectiveness of the modeled natural attenuation that is expected to occur. EPD should require monitoring twice a year every year.

EPD Response:

The permit is for 10 years. Currently over 10 years of groundwater monitoring data exists for the site. This data will be added to the data from future sampling events and EPD believes the combined results will be sufficient to determine the effectiveness of the selected remedy.

Comment 3:

It is unclear when sampling events will occur, especially in years with two sampling events. Additionally, EPD should not allow any changes to the monitoring well network including the number or placement of wells as described in the sampling plan without public input.

EPD Response:

Annual groundwater monitoring events will coincide with annual shutdowns of the facility for maintenance. In odd years (when monitoring will be conducted twice a year) the second monitoring event will be scheduled approximately six months from the maintenance shutdown event. Symrise will notify EPD when monitoring will occur a minimum of two weeks prior to each monitoring event. Additionally, proposed scheduling for groundwater monitoring events will be provided in groundwater monitoring reports. Furthermore, any modifications of the permit, including portions of the groundwater monitoring

program, will undergo public notice as required by the applicable regulations in 40 CFR §264 and 40 CFR§270. No changes to the permit were made based on this comment.

Comment 4:

EPD should continue to require Symrise to monitor contaminants until they reach background levels as is indicated in Table 1 in the Draft permit rather than utilizing risk-based remedial goals or alternative concentration levels. Symrise should be required to restore groundwater to background levels as is currently indicated in the draft permit and required by the EPA Consent Decree rather than leaving contamination behind and causing further blight to Glynn County.

EPD Response

The permit provides for monitoring groundwater until levels have reached the Groundwater Protection Standard for three consecutive years. However, 40 CFR §264.94(b) and (c) allow the development of alternative concentration levels (ACLs). ACLs allow groundwater concentration levels above background levels in favor of site-specific risk-based standards that protect human health and the environment. The permit does not currently include ACLs. Incorporation of ACLs into the permit would require a modification which would undergo public notice as required by the applicable regulations in 40 CFR §264 and 40 CFR§270.

Comment 5:

Symrise and EPD should host annual public meetings and provide status updates to the general community. Additionally, an effort should be made to make documents available online, create a mailing list, and share notifications with the general public when new documents are uploaded. At a minimum, the Glynn Environmental Coalition would like to be included on correspondence of key documents between EPD and Symrise as is done at various other hazardous waste sites in Glynn County so we can continue to facilitate community involvement as we have since our inception in 1990.

EPD Response:

The Georgia Hazardous Waste Management Act and Rules for Hazardous Waste Management Chapter 391-3-11 do not provide EPD the authority to require that permittees make documents available to the public. EPD is also not authorized to require the Permittees to host public meetings. Additionally, information on the issuance of a new permit, permit renewal, or permit modification for a hazardous waste facility is available online at <https://epd.georgia.gov/public-announcements-0/land-protection-branch-public-announcements>. File reviews can be requested under the Georgia Open Records Act (GORA) by emailing GORArequest.land@dnr.ga.gov. Community members can reach out to EPD to ask questions regarding Hazardous Waste at 404-657-8600 or by email at askepd@gaepd.org. No changes were made to the permit based on this comment.

Comment 6:

Modify the draft language for Condition I.B.2 of the permit to state “The Permittee shall maintain at the facility **and via an online portal...**” This would greatly improve the general public’s ability to access and review documents pertinent to environmental conditions at the site.

EPD Response:

The Georgia Hazardous Waste Management Act and Rules for Hazardous Waste Management Chapter 391-3-11 does not provide EPD the authority to require that permittees develop an online portal to access information about the environmental conditions at the site.

Comment 7:

Condition I.B.4 states “When the Permittee becomes aware that the Permittee failed to submit any relevant facts in the permit application or submitted incorrect information in a permit application or in any report to the Director, the Permittee shall promptly submit such corrected facts of information.” An image was provided to the general public during a public meeting held on February 16th that was not included in the permit application package dated December 2021. Has the report that includes these images been updated with EPD at this point?

EPD Response:

Information not available at the time of the permit application was used in the Public Availability Session on February 16, 2022. That information does not change EPD’s technical evaluations underlying the Draft Permit. This data and the subsequent figures will be incorporated into the next groundwater monitoring report.

Comment 8:

Modify the draft language in Condition I.B.4.g of the permit to state, “The groundwater flow rates and directions in the aquifer where contaminants of concern exist.” We are not sure why the ‘uppermost aquifer’ is specified here. The Brunswick Surficial Aquifer in some locations can be further separated into the upper (~0 to 100 ft bgs) and lower (~100 to 200 ft bgs) surficial aquifer if a confining unit is present (the confining units have been documented in areas to not be continuous. The Upper Brunswick Surficial Aquifer can be further separated into shallow (~0 to 40 ft bgs), intermediate (~40 to 70 ft bgs), or deep (~70 to 100 ft bgs) zones when monitoring at various depths. Additionally, both vertical and horizontal benzene migration has been documented in the Upper Surficial Aquifer at the Hercules plant to the deep zone (~70 to 100 ft bgs) and groundwater flows vary significantly at different depths. This statement could be clarified by adding a depth that Symrise would be required to monitor and record groundwater flows, or we suggest otherwise further clarifying this statement to ensure that groundwater flows at all depths where contamination is present will be documented and retained.

EPD Response:

Uppermost Aquifer has a specific regulatory definition per 40 CFR 260.10: “*Uppermost aquifer* means the geologic formation nearest the natural ground surface that is an aquifer, as well as, lower aquifers that are hydraulically interconnected with this aquifer within the facility's property boundary.” The term identifies the aquifers and lower aquifers hydraulically interconnected within the property’s boundary collectively as the “uppermost aquifer.” Vertical and horizontal delineation of groundwater contamination has already been assessed on site and groundwater monitoring wells screened in several depth zones of the aquifer will continue to be monitored as part of the permit to assess if additional impacts occur at deeper levels in the aquifer. No changes were made to the permit based on this comment.

Comment 9:

What requirements exist for notifying the general public of circumstances which may endanger human health and the environment? Please consider adding provisions that would require that.

EPD Response:

The facility is required to notify EPD of any circumstances which may endanger human health and the environment by Section I.C.5 of the permit. Although public notice is not specified, EPD would take steps including public notification if deemed necessary in protection of human health and the environment. The Permittee is required to sample groundwater semi-annually and to notify EPD regarding issues of noncompliance. These records are available for public review in our office and through GORA. No changes were made to the permit based on this comment.

Comment 10:

What requirements exist for the Permittee to share reports regarding compliance/noncompliance, progress reports, and/or semi-annual/annual reports with the general public? Please consider adding provisions that would require annual public meetings to share pertinent updates such as these with the general public.

EPD Response

EPD does not have the authority to require Symrise to share specific information with the public or to host public meetings., However, a GORA request (e-mail: GORArequest.land@dnr.ga.gov.) can be made for any documentation regarding the facility in EPD files. These records are also available for public review in our office. No changes were made to the permit based on this comment.