

STATE OF LOUISIANA

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

IN THE MATTER OF:

ST. CHARLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

AI # 158226

**PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE LOUISIANA
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT**

LA. R.S. 30:2001, ET SEQ.

* **Settlement Tracking No.**
* **SA-AE-25-0018**
*
* **Enforcement Tracking No.**
* **AE-PP-22-00931**
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SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

The following Settlement Agreement is hereby agreed to between St. Charles Parish School Board (“Respondent”) and the Department of Environmental Quality (“DEQ” or “the Department”), under authority granted by the Louisiana Environmental Quality Act, La. R.S. 30:2001, et seq. (“the Act”).

I

Respondent owns and/or operates a school located in Destrehan, St. Charles Parish, Louisiana (“the Facility”).

II

On May 10, 2023, the Department issued to Respondent a Notice of Potential Penalty, Enforcement Tracking No. AE-PP-22-00931 (Exhibit 1).

III

Respondent denies it committed any violations or that it is liable for any fines, forfeitures and/or penalties.

IV

Nonetheless, Respondent, without making any admission of liability under state or federal statute or regulation, agrees to pay, and the Department agrees to accept, a payment in the amount of TWELVE THOUSAND AND NO/100 DOLLARS (\$12,000.00), of which Five Thousand Two Hundred Eighty-One and 94/100 (\$5,281.94) represents the Department's enforcement costs, in settlement of the claims set forth in this Settlement Agreement. The total amount of money expended by Respondent on cash payments to the Department as described above, shall be considered a civil penalty for tax purposes, as required by La. R.S. 30:2050.7(E)(1).

V

Respondent further agrees that the Department may consider the inspection report(s), the Notice of Potential Penalty and this Settlement Agreement for the purpose of determining compliance history in connection with any future enforcement or permitting action by the Department against Respondent, and in any such action Respondent shall be estopped from objecting to the above-referenced documents being considered as proving the violations alleged herein for the sole purpose of determining Respondent's compliance history.

VI

This Settlement Agreement shall be considered a final order of the Secretary for all purposes, including, but not limited to, enforcement under La. R.S. 30:2025(G)(2), and Respondent hereby waives any right to administrative or judicial review of the terms of this agreement, except such review as may be required for interpretation of this Settlement Agreement in any action by the Department to enforce this Settlement Agreement.

VII

This Settlement Agreement is being made in the interest of settling the state's claims and

avoiding for both parties the expense and effort involved in litigation or an adjudicatory hearing. In agreeing to the compromise and Settlement Agreement, the Department considered the factors for issuing civil penalties set forth in La. R.S. 30:2025(E) of the Act.

VIII

As required by law, the Department has submitted this Settlement Agreement to the Louisiana Attorney General for approval or rejection. The Attorney General's concurrence is appended to this Settlement Agreement.

IX

The Respondent has caused a public notice advertisement to be placed in the official journal of the parish governing authority in St. Charles Parish, Louisiana. The advertisement, in form and wording approved by the Department, announced the availability of this Settlement Agreement for public view and comment and the opportunity for a public hearing. Respondent has submitted an original proof-of-publication affidavit and an original public notice to the Department and, as of the date this Settlement Agreement is executed on behalf of the Department, more than forty-five (45) days have elapsed since publication of the notice.

X

Payment is to be made within thirty (30) days from notice of the Secretary's signature. If payment is not received within that time, this Settlement Agreement is voidable at the option of the Department. The Respondent shall provide its tax identification number when submitting payment. Payments are to be made by check, payable to the Department of Environmental Quality, and mailed or delivered to the attention of Accountant Administrator, Financial Services Division, Department of Environmental Quality, Post Office Box 4303, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 70821-4303. Each payment shall be accompanied by a completed Settlement Payment Form attached hereto.

XI

In consideration of the above, any claims for penalties are hereby compromised and settled in accordance with the terms of this Settlement Agreement.

XII

Each undersigned representative of the parties certifies that he or she is fully authorized to execute this Settlement Agreement on behalf of his or her respective party, and to legally bind such party to its terms and conditions.

ST. CHARLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

BY: _____
(Signature)

(Printed)

TITLE: _____

THUS DONE AND SIGNED in duplicate original before me this _____ day of _____, 20 _____, at _____.

NOTARY PUBLIC (ID # _____)

(stamped or printed)


LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Aurelia S. Giacometto, Secretary

BY: _____
Jerrie "Jerry" Lang, Assistant Secretary
Office of Environmental Compliance

THUS DONE AND SIGNED in duplicate original before me this _____ day of _____, 20 _____, at Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

NOTARY PUBLIC (ID # _____)

(stamped or printed)

Approved: 

Jerrie "Jerry" Lang, Assistant Secretary

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



ROGER W. GINGLES
SECRETARY

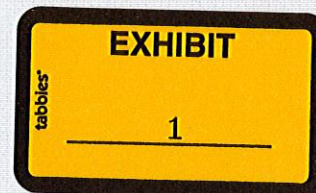
State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

MAY 10 2023

CERTIFIED MAIL (7022 2410 0000 7120 0161)
RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

ST. CHARLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD
c/o Dr. Ken Oertling, Superintendent
13855 River Road
Luling, LA 70070

**RE: NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY
ENFORCEMENT TRACKING NO. AE-PP-22-00931
AGENCY INTEREST NO. 158226**



Dear Sir:

On or about September 24, 2021, October 29, 2021, November 3, 2021, November 12, 2021, November 18, 2021, and November 24, 2021, inspections of **DESTREHAN HIGH SCHOOL**, owned and/or operated by **ST. CHARLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD (RESPONDENT)**, were performed to determine the degree of compliance with the Louisiana Environmental Quality Act (the Act) and the Air Quality Regulations. The school is located at 1 Wildcat Lane in Destrehan, St. Charles Parish, Louisiana. The Respondent is a Local Education Agency (LEA) subject to LAC 33:III.Chapter 51 (Asbestos).

The Respondent contracted SRP Environmental, LLC to perform an asbestos inspection prior to renovation due to the damage that Hurricane Ida caused to the school. SRP Environmental, LLC subcontracted Altec Environmental Consulting, LLC to conduct asbestos sampling. On or about September 15, 2021, samples were collected of suspect materials not previously sampled in prior inspections associated with the school's Asbestos Management Plan (AMP). Four (4) of the 18 samples were found to be positive for asbestos-containing fibers. Since the asbestos content of the samples were low, these samples were analyzed further using polarized light microscopy (PLM) Point Count for more precise determinations of percent concentration. In PLM Point Count results dated September 17, 2021, three (3) samples were found to be above the regulatory limit of 1% asbestos content.

A representative of the Respondent hired emergency contractor, Creative Improvements, Inc., who subcontracted Pintail Contracting, LLC to remove sheetrock due to water damage and roof collapse from Hurricane Ida. Creative Improvements, Inc. and Pintail Contracting, LLC are not accredited asbestos contractors recognized by the Department. The Respondent had knowledge of the presence of asbestos due to samples collected on September 15, 2021. On September 17, 2021, Pintail Contracting, LLC began the sheetrock removal, and sheetrock was partially removed from the Horseshoe area of the school. The

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removed debris was staged in front of the school on the concrete parking lot. The sheetrock removal started prior to receiving asbestos sample results using PLM Point Count. Once it was discovered that the removed sheetrock contained an asbestos concentration greater than the regulatory limit of one (1) percent, the contractor immediately stopped all work and sealed off entrances. Because a renovation/demolition activity occurred without the owner/operator affirmatively demonstrating there is no ACM in the debris, all debris at the site is categorized as ACD, in accordance with LAC 33:III.5151.F.1.d. The ACD was not managed in accordance with procedures for asbestos emission control set for the in LAC 33:III.5151.F.3. This resulted in a major fiber release episode as defined in LAC 33:III.5151.B. Specifically, the renovation was not conducted in accordance with work area controls to prevent the release of asbestos fibers into the air. Further, ACD removed from the school during the renovation was staged in the parking lot of the school in a manner that would not prevent the release of asbestos fibers into the air. Therefore, the improper management of the ACD had the potential to cause risk to human health and/or the environment.

A full compliance evaluation inspection of asbestos removal at the school was conducted in response to the fiber release (T-204923) notified to the Department on or about September 22, 2021, due to a demolition/renovation in Destrehan High School Building A following Hurricane Ida. While the investigation by the Department is not yet complete, the following violations were noted during the course of the inspection:

- A. The Respondent failed to submit an AAC-2 asbestos notification prior to a demolition/renovation, in violation of LAC 33:III.5151.F.1.1 and La. R.S. 30:2057(A)(2). Specifically, sheetrock removal began on or about September 17, 2021, and the Department received the AAC-2 form on or about September 24, 2021. The Respondent's representative indicated to the Department's inspector that he had received notice of asbestos in the sheetrock via email on September 21, 2021. Contractors immediately stopped all work and sealed the doors after discovering the sheetrock was positive for greater than the regulatory limit of one (1) percent of asbestos. On or about September 22, 2021, SRP Environmental notified the Department of the major fiber release.
- B. The Respondent failed to categorize all debris at the site as ACD and follow procedures and requirements as provided in LAC 33:III Chapter 51. Subchapter M., in violation of LAC 33:III.5151.F.1.d and La. R.S. 30:2057(A)(2). The Respondent hired an emergency contractor to start removing sheetrock from the school prior to receiving the asbestos testing results. Therefore, the sheetrock was not treated as ACD as it was being removed from the school. At the time of the September 24, 2021, inspection, the Department's inspector observed sheetrock debris in the parking lot. The Respondent contracted Gill Industries, asbestos abatement contractor, to perform the abatement of removing approximately 50 cubic yards of ACD starting on September 24, 2021, with a completion date on September 30, 2021. At the time of the September 24, 2021, inspection, the Department's inspector observed Gill Industries actively removing sheetrock from the parking lot, and the ACD was observed to be wetted down and placed into clear bags for disposal.

Pursuant to La. R.S. 30:2050.3(B), you are hereby notified that the issuance of a penalty assessment is being considered for the violation(s) described herein. Written comments may be filed regarding the violation(s) and the contemplated penalty. If you elect to submit comments, it is requested that they be submitted within ten (10) days of receipt of this notice.

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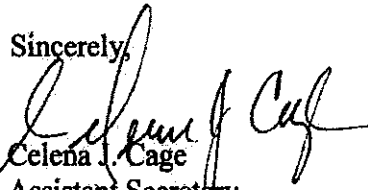
Prior to the issuance of any additional appropriate enforcement action, you may request a meeting with the Department to present any mitigating circumstances concerning the violation(s). If you would like to have such a meeting, please contact Teri Tharp at (225) 219-3165 or Teri.Tharp2@la.gov within ten (10) days of receipt of this **NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY**.

The Department is required by La. R.S. 30:2025(E)(3)(a) to consider the gross revenues of the Respondent and the monetary benefits of noncompliance in order to determine whether a penalty will be assessed and the amount of such penalty. Please forward the Respondent's most current annual gross revenue statement along with a statement of the monetary benefits of noncompliance for the cited violations to the above named contact person within ten (10) days of receipt of this **NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY**. Include with your statement of monetary benefits the method(s) you utilized to arrive at the sum. If you assert that no monetary benefits have been gained, you are to fully justify this statement. If the Respondent chooses not to submit the requested most current annual gross revenues statement within ten (10) days, it will be viewed by the Department as an admission that the Respondent has the ability to pay the statutory maximum penalty as outlined in La. R.S. 30:2025.

For each violation described herein, the Department reserves the right to seek civil penalties and the right to seek compliance with its rules and regulations in any manner allowed by law, and nothing herein shall be construed to preclude the right to seek such penalties and compliance.

The Department assesses civil penalties based on LAC 33:I.Subpart1.Chapter 7. To expedite closure of this **NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY**, the Respondent may offer a settlement amount to resolve any claim for civil penalties for the violation(s) described herein. The Respondent may offer a settlement amount, but the Department is under no obligation to enter into settlement negotiations. The decision to proceed with a settlement is at the discretion of the Department. The settlement offer amount may be entered on the attached "**NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY REQUEST TO SETTLE**" form. The Respondent may submit the settlement offer within one hundred and eighty (180) days of receipt of this **NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY**. The Respondent must include a justification of the offer. **DO NOT** submit payment of the offer amount with the form. The Department will review the settlement offer and notify the Respondent as to whether the offer is or is not accepted.

To reduce document handling, please refer to the Enforcement Tracking Number and Agency Interest Number on the front of this document on all correspondence in response to this action.

Sincerely,

Celena J. Cage
Assistant Secretary
Office of Environmental Compliance

CJC/TLT/tlt
Alt ID No. N/A

c: Destrehan High School

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Dr. Jason Madere, Principal

1 Wildeat Lane

Destrehan, LA 70047

**LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE
ENFORCEMENT DIVISION
POST OFFICE BOX 4312
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70821-4312**



**NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY
REQUEST TO SETTLE (OPTIONAL)**

Enforcement Tracking No.	AE-PP-22-00931	Contact Name	Terl Tharp
Agency Interest (AI) No.	158226	Contact Phone No.	(225) 219-3165
Alternate ID No.	N/A		
Respondent:	ST. CHARLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD	Facility Name:	Destrehan High School
	c/o Dr. Ken Oertling, Superintendent	Physical Location:	1 Wildcat Lane
	13855 River Road	City, State, Zip:	Destrehan, LA 70047
	Luling, LA 70070	Parish:	St. Charles

SETTLEMENT OFFER (OPTIONAL)

(check the applicable option)

The Respondent is not interested in entering into settlement negotiations with the Department with the understanding that the Department has the right to assess civil penalties based on LAC 33:1.Subpart1.Chapter7.

In order to resolve any claim for civil penalties for the violations in NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY (AE-PP-22-00931), the Respondent is interested in entering into settlement negotiations with the Department and would like to set up a meeting to discuss settlement procedures.

The Respondent may submit the settlement offer within one hundred and eighty (180) days of receipt of this NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY (AE-PP-22-00931).

In order to resolve any claim for civil penalties for the violations in NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY (AE-PP-22-00931), the Respondent is interested in entering into settlement negotiations with the Department and offers to pay \$ _____ which shall include LDEQ enforcement costs and any monetary benefit of non-compliance.

- Monetary component = \$ _____
- Beneficial Environmental Project (BEP) component (optional) = \$ _____
- **DO NOT SUBMIT PAYMENT OF THE OFFER WITH THIS FORM- the Department will review the settlement offer and notify the Respondent as to whether the offer is or is not accepted.**

The Respondent has reviewed the violations noted in NOTICE OF POTENTIAL PENALTY (AE-PP-22-00931) and has attached a justification of its offer and a description of any BEPs if included in settlement offer.

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

I certify, under provisions in Louisiana and United States law that provide criminal penalties for false statements, that based on information and belief formed after reasonable inquiry, the statements and information attached and the compliance statement above, are true, accurate, and complete. I also certify that I do not owe outstanding fees or penalties to the Department for this facility or any other facility I own or operate. I further certify that I am either the Respondent or an authorized representative of the Respondent.

Respondent's Signature	Respondent's Printed Name	Respondent's Title
Respondent's Physical Address	Respondent's Phone #	Date

MAIL COMPLETED DOCUMENT TO THE ADDRESS BELOW:

Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Office of Environmental Compliance
Enforcement Division
P.O. Box 4312
Baton Rouge, LA 70821
Attn: Terl Tharp

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WHAT IS A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT?

Once the Department has determined that a penalty is warranted for a violation, the Assistant Secretary of the Department, with the concurrence of the Attorney General, may enter into a settlement agreement with the Respondent as a means to resolve the Department's claim for a penalty.

HOW DOES THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT PROCESS WORK?

To begin the settlement agreement process, the Department must receive a written settlement offer. Once this offer is submitted, it is sent for approval by the Assistant Secretary of the Office of Environmental Compliance. The formal Settlement Agreement is drafted and sent to the Attorney General's office where the Attorney General has a 90 day concurrence period. During this time, the Respondent is required to run a public notice in an official journal and/or newspaper of general circulation in each affected parish. After which, a 45 day public comment period is opened to allow the public to submit comments. Once the Department has received concurrence, the settlement agreement is signed by both parties. The Department then forwards a letter to the responsible party to establish a payment plan and/or beneficial environmental project (BEP).

WHAT SHOULD I INCLUDE IN A SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT?

The Department uses the penalty determination method defined in LAC 33:1.705 as a guideline to accepting settlement offers. The penalty matrix is used to determine a penalty range for each violation based on the two violation specific factors, the nature and gravity of the violation and the degree of risk/impact to human health and property.

NATURE AND GRAVITY OF THE VIOLATION			
	MAJOR	MODERATE	MINOR
MAJOR	\$32,500 to \$20,000	\$20,000 to \$15,000	\$15,000 to \$11,000
	MODERATE	\$11,000 to \$8,000	\$8,000 to \$5,000
MINOR		\$3,000 to \$1,500	\$1,500 to \$500

Degree of Risk to Human Health or Property

Major: (actual measurable harm or substantial risk of harm) A violation of major impact to an environmental resource or a hazard characterized by high volume and/or frequent occurrence and/or high pollutant concentration.

Moderate: (potential for measurable detrimental impact) A violation of moderate impact and hazard may be one characterized by occasional occurrence and/or pollutant concentration that may be expected to have a detrimental effect under certain conditions

Minor: (no harm or risk of harm) A violation of minor impact are isolated single incidences and that cause no measurable detrimental effect or are administrative in nature.

Nature and Gravity of the Violation

Major: Violations of statutes, regulations, orders, permit limits, or permit requirements that result in negating the intent of the requirement to such an extent that little or no implementation of requirements occurred.

Moderate: Violations that result in substantially negating the intent of the requirements, but some implementation of the requirements occurred.

Minor: Violations that result in some deviation from the intent of the requirement; however, substantial implementation is demonstrated.

The range is adjusted using the following violator specific factors:

1. history of previous violations or repeated noncompliance;
2. gross revenues generated by the respondent;
3. degree of culpability, recalcitrance, defiance, or indifference to regulations or orders;
4. whether the Respondent has failed to mitigate or to make a reasonable attempt to mitigate the damages caused by the violation; and
5. whether the violation and the surrounding circumstances were immediately reported to the department, and whether the violation was concealed or there was an attempt to conceal by the Respondent.



Given the previous information, the following formula is used to obtain a penalty amount.

$$\text{Penalty Event Total} = \text{Penalty Event Minimum} + (\text{Adjustment Percentage} \times (\text{Penalty Event Maximum} - \text{Penalty Event Minimum}))$$

After this, the Department adds any monetary benefit of noncompliance to the penalty event. In the event that a monetary benefit is gained due to the delay of a cost that is ultimately paid, the Department adds the applicable judicial interest. Finally, the Department adds all response costs including, but not limited to, the cost of conducting inspections, and the staff time devoted to the preparation of reports and issuing enforcement actions.

WHAT IS A BEP?

A BEP is a project that provides for environmental mitigation which the respondent is not otherwise legally required to perform, but which the defendant/respondent agrees to undertake as a component of the settlement agreement. Project categories for BEPs include public health, pollution prevention, pollution reduction, environmental restoration and protection, assessments and audits, environmental compliance promotion, and emergency planning, preparedness and response. Other projects may be considered if the Department determines that these projects have environmental merit and is otherwise fully consistent with the intent of the BEP regulations.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY OFFER IS REJECTED?

If an offer is rejected by the Assistant Secretary, the Legal Division will contact the responsible party, or anyone designated as an appropriate contact in the settlement offer, to discuss any discrepancies.

WHERE CAN I FIND EXAMPLES AND MORE INFORMATION?

- Settlement Offers searchable in EDMS using the following filters
Media: Air Quality, Function: Enforcement, Description: Settlement
- Settlement Agreements Enforcement Division's website
specific examples can be provided upon request
- Penalty Determination Method LAC 33:1 Chapter 7
- Beneficial Environmental Projects LAC 33:1 Chapter 25
FAQs
- Judicial Interest..... provided by the Louisiana State Bar Association

