



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

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January 6, 2025

Adam Schmid
City of Hood River
818 Riverside Drive
Hood River, Oregon 97031

RE: Pre-Enforcement Notice
City of Hood River
2025-PEN-9780
File #39694, NPDES Permit #101729
Hood River County

Dear Adam Schmid:

The City of Hood River operates a municipal wastewater (sewage) treatment facility and discharges treated effluent to the Columbia River under National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit #101729.

Based on the review of the City's 2024 Discharge Monitoring Reports and an in-person compliance inspection of the facility on November 5, 2024, DEQ has documented the following fourteen (14) violations of Oregon environmental law. With these violations, the City of Hood River failed to comply with the terms and conditions of NPDES Permit #101729, which is a violation of ORS 468B.025(2).

Violations: Effluent Limit Exceedances for Total Suspended Solids (TSS)

Schedule A, Condition 1 of the permit establishes effluent limits, including those for TSS concentration and loading listed in Table A1 for seasonal discharges from May 1 – October 31. However, the City failed to meet the required effluent limits on the violation date(s) shown in the table below.

Exceedance of a technology-based effluent limit (TBEL), including BOD₅ and/or TSS, by 50% or more is a Class I violation (OAR 340-012-0055(1)(k)). Exceedance of a technology-based effluent limit (TBEL), including BOD₅ and/or TSS, by 20% or more but less than 50% is a Class II violation (OAR 340-012-0055(2)(a)). Exceedance of a TBEL by less than 20% for BOD₅ and TSS is a Class III violation (OAR 340-012-0055(3)(b)). There are four (4) occurrences of this violation.

Effluent Limit	Reported Result (% over limit)	Violation Date	Violation Class
TSS Monthly Avg Concentration: 20 mg/L	27.4 mg/L (37%)	August 2024	II
TSS Weekly Avg Max Concentration: 30 mg/L	89.6 mg/L (199%)	Week of August 4-10, 2024	I
TSS Weekly Avg Max Loading: 500 lb/day	724.7 lb/day (45%)	Week of August 4-10, 2024	II
TSS Daily Max Loading: 660 lb/day	769.8 lb/day (17%)	August 6, 2024	III

The cover letter submitted with the August 2024 DMR results stated the primary cause of the TSS exceedances was high denitrification in the system due to high loading and filamentous bacteria in the system. The City has not reported that the issue is ongoing. The City must ensure that all effluent limitations are met, including Schedule A effluent limits.

Violations: Failure to Monitor

Schedule B.3(a), Table B2 of the NPDES permit requires the facility to monitor for influent 5-day Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD₅) twice weekly among other influent parameters. Similarly, Schedule B.3(b), Table B3 requires the facility to monitor for Total Ammonia (as N) once per month among other effluent parameters.

The facility reported failing to monitor for parameters required by Schedule B of the assigned NPDES permit. These are listed in the table below. Failing to collect monitoring data required in Schedule B of the permit is a Class I violation (OAR 340-012-0055(1)(o)). There are two (2) occurrences of this violation.

Parameter	Date	Required Frequency	Violation Class
Effluent Total Ammonia (as N) (mg/L)	August 2024	Monthly	I
Influent BOD ₅ (mg/L)	June 26, 2024	2/week (one of required samples missed)	I

The City must ensure that all Schedule B monitoring requirements are met and reported to DEQ as required by the assigned permit.

Violations: Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) Failures

The facility reported QA/QC failures for parameters required by Schedule B of the assigned NPDES permit as a cover letter with the submitted DMRs. There are eight (8) occurrences of QA/QC failures.

Per the City's March 2024 DMR report, the influent and effluent BOD₅ and TSS samples on March 18th had to be cancelled due to failing temperature criteria and no result were provided. A passing sample was reported for March 19th and used in the calculations for one of the required 2/week monitoring results. The second sample for that week was re-collected on March 20th and failed temperature criteria, but a result was provided which was below permit limits if used in permit the calculations and is cited here as a QA/QC failure.

Per the City's April 2024 DMR report, there was an incubator malfunction which resulted in QA/QC failure of the April 22, 2024 BOD₅ sample. One result was provided for the weekly requirement on April 23rd which failed the Relative Percent Difference, but the data were useable in the calculations for permit compliance per DEQ's NetDMR Guidance. These are listed in the table below.

Parameter	Date	Required Frequency	Violation Class
Influent BOD ₅	March 20, 2024	2/week	II
Effluent BOD ₅	March 20, 2024	2/week	II
Influent TSS	March 20, 2024	2/week	II
Effluent TSS	March 20, 2024	2/week	II
Influent BOD ₅	April 22, 2024	2/week	II
Effluent BOD ₅	April 22, 2024	2/week	II
Influent BOD ₅	April 23, 2024	2/week	II
Effluent BOD ₅	April 23, 2024	2/week	II

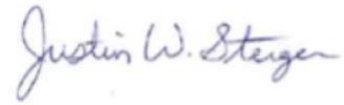
These failures constitute a violation of the quality assurance plan required for permit compliance monitoring. Violating any management, monitoring, or operational plan established pursuant to a waste discharge permit is a Class II violation (OAR 340-012-0055(2)(d)).

Summary:

This matter has been referred to the DEQ's Office of Compliance and Enforcement for formal enforcement action. Formal enforcement action may result in assessment of civil penalties and/or a Department order. A formal enforcement action may include a civil penalty assessment for each day of violation.

If you believe any of the facts in this Pre-enforcement Notice are in error, you may provide information to me at the office address shown at the top of this letter. DEQ will consider new information you submit and take appropriate action. DEQ endeavors to assist you in your compliance efforts. Should you have any questions about the content of this letter or desire any follow-up technical assistance, please contact me at (541) 633-2016.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Justin W. Sterger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Justin W. Sterger
Senior WQ Permit Writer

cc: Mike Hiatt, DEQ
Alyssa Witt, DEQ
Anna Morgan-Hayes, DEQ
Blair Edwards, DEQ
Louie Hooks, JACOBS
Jeff Houchin, JACOBS
DEQ Enforcement Section
DEQ WQ Data Team