



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270

March 29, 2021

Charles W. Munce, P.E.
GHD Services Inc.
5551 Corporate Boulevard, Suite 200
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70808

RE: Request for Northern Impoundment Schedule Extension
San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site
CERCLA Docket No. 06-02-18

Dear Mr. Munce,

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received and has reviewed International Paper Company and McGinnes Industrial Maintenance Corporation (Respondents) written notification, dated February 3, 2021, requesting an extension of the deadline for submittal of the *Pre-Final 90% Remedial Design – Northern Impoundment* (Northern Impoundment 90% RD) for the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site (Site). The notification was submitted pursuant to Paragraph 87 of the Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent for Remedial Design (AOC).

The Northern Impoundment 90% RD is currently due on April 22, 2021. Due to several outstanding items that need to be completed in connection with the Northern Impoundment 90% RD, the Respondents request a schedule extension of at least 270 days for the submittal of the Northern Impoundment 90% RD, until January 17, 2022. The Respondents' request states that the extension is necessary to allow time for (i) completion of supplemental design analytical and geotechnical sampling to better delineate the extent of the impacted material for removal and to better understand geotechnical conditions to support the current conceptual alignment and design of the best management practice (BMP) based on developments and input from the Technical Working Group (TWG), and (ii) receipt of and the opportunity to evaluate downstream modeling data from the Coastal Water Authority (CWA) that is vitally important to checking the assumptions used for the Remedial Design (RD).

The basis for the extension request is further outlined in the notification. The significant changes to the RD, including changes to the excavation methodology and associated BMP, are directly attributed by Respondents to the following:

- Results of the wastewater treatability testing concluded that the approach to water treatment during excavation in a flooded environment is infeasible; therefore, the proposed excavation methodology is not feasible. Respondents are now shifting to focus on performing all excavation work "in the dry."
- There are significant barriers and risks associated with excavating the deeper areas in dry conditions, and additional data will be required to evaluate the feasibility of this approach.
- Currently, there are data gaps in the delineation of the vertical extent of the material that must be excavated, as well as a lack of geotechnical data in the area where the new BMP is to be located. BMP design and alignment must be adapted to address the change in design conditions.
- A CWA project that includes changes to the Lake Houston control structures may affect water levels at the Site. Those changed conditions could then require reassessment of the wall height and impact other

aspects of the BMP design. Once available, the CWA hydraulic modeling outputs will need to be incorporated by GHD into a model to evaluate the BMP, and any BMP design changes will need to be incorporated into the design.

EPA concurs that changes to the RD constitute justification for a schedule extension as outlined in the AOC. As noted above, the Respondents requested at least a 270-day extension. The basis for the request is premised on the following:

- GHD submitted a Supplemental Design Investigation Sampling Plan to EPA on February 19, 2021. The Respondents anticipate that they will have final approval of the work plan by the end of April 2021.
- Following work plan approval, the Respondents would need at least 45 days to finalize fieldwork preparations and begin the supplemental design investigation fieldwork in mid-June 2021.
- The supplemental design investigation fieldwork is anticipated to take approximately 75 days, plus an additional 30 days to receive validated analytical data – extending through September 2021.
- Following receipt of validated analytical data, the design team would need approximately 110 to 120 days to incorporate the new data into the Northern Impoundment 90% RD, requiring an extension of the submittal date for the Northern Impoundment 90% RD to January 17, 2022.
- Following receipt of CWA's modeling outputs, those outputs will need to be incorporated by GHD into a model to evaluate the top elevation of the BMP. EPA understands that approximately 60 days would be required to incorporate the CWA outputs into the model and to run the model.
- After the model incorporating the CWA data outputs is developed, an additional 30 days would then be required to evaluate whether the top elevation of the BMP is still adequate or whether it needs to be adjusted.
- If the top elevation of the BMP needs to be adjusted, an additional 70 days, at a minimum, would then be required to modify the design.

EPA approves a schedule extension of 270 days for the submittal of the Northern Impoundment 90% RD, until January 17, 2022. In response to the Supplemental Design Investigation Sampling Plan, EPA is requiring that additional waste characterization samples be taken to supplement waste characterization sampling performed during previous PDI activities. EPA and GHD are currently coordinating with the CWA regarding access to the requested modeling data. If the CWA data is not made available in a sufficient time to meet this extended schedule, EPA will consider a further schedule extension. EPA will monitor the progression of the supplemental field work. If developments occur that require further extension of this this proposed timeline, GHD can submit an additional extension request for evaluation.

Please contact me if you have any questions. You may reach me at 214-665-7597.

Sincerely,



Ashley Howard
Project Manager

cc: Phil Slowiak, IPC
Brent Sasser, IPC
Judy Armour, MIMC