



June 15, 2020

Jon Vrabely
Huttig Building Products
555 Maryville University Dr., Suite 400
St. Louis, MO 63141

VIA MAIL AND EMAIL

Subject: Response to May 21, 2020 letter requesting postponement of remediation activities at the Missoula White Pine Sash Facility, Missoula, MT

Dear Mr. Vrabely:

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) received the above-referenced letter from Huttig Building Products (Huttig), dated May 21, 2020. As you know, Huttig has been the lead party responsible for implementing the cleanup at the Missoula White Pine Sash Facility (Facility) that is required by the February 2015 Record of Decision issued by DEQ. Huttig has previously implemented cleanup activities on part of the Facility that included removal and disposal of wood waste and contaminated soils.

The most significant cleanup activities that must still be completed at the Facility include excavating contaminated soils in the former treatment area, treating the soil in a yet to be constructed engineered land treatment unit, disposing of the treated soil properly, and blending/injecting oxidant into the deeper soils to clean up groundwater. On November 18, 2019 DEQ approved the remediation work plan for the former treatment area. DEQ considers this phase to be the most logistically complex portion of the cleanup at the Missoula White Pine Sash Facility. Huttig planned to construct the land treatment unit, excavate contaminated soils in the former treatment area and load the soils into a land treatment unit, as well as conduct oxidant soil blending in the base of the excavation during the 2020 construction season.

Huttig contacted DEQ in March 2020 and verbally expressed concerns regarding the ability to move forward with this phase of cleanup at this time, due to uncertainty about the ability to mobilize construction personnel to the Facility, as well as economic concerns relating to the uncertainty regarding Huttig's customer base and operations as the COVID-19 pandemic began to spike in the United States. Huttig further evaluated the impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic had on its business operations and followed up with a letter dated May 21, 2020 requesting postponement of cleanup activities scheduled for 2020, citing financial concerns and concerns about the safety of remediation workers. Huttig states in its letter that the contaminated soil in the former treatment area is either fenced or underneath pavement and that there are currently no water wells in use within the groundwater plume.

DEQ worked with Huttig during the remedial design phase and approved a phased cleanup approach for the Facility to ensure the Facility is cleaned up, while also balancing contractor availability, economics, field seasons (weather), and inter-related dependent components of the cleanup. DEQ is committed to ensuring the Missoula White Pine Sash Facility is cleaned up as required by the Record of Decision for the Facility. DEQ also acknowledges the sudden and unexpected challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused across the country. DEQ disagrees with the use of the statement in Huttig's letter that the Facility does not present an imminent threat to human health or the environment, because the term "imminent and substantial threat" has specific meanings that apply to state superfund facilities. However, DEQ agrees that the soil contamination in the former treatment area is currently fenced to control access and there are no drinking water wells within the groundwater plume, which means people are not being directly exposed to the contamination.

DEQ believes it is reasonable to allow Huttig additional time as requested in its letter. DEQ came to this decision based up the unforeseen complications that have resulted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is DEQ's ultimate goal to ensure the Facility is cleaned up as required by the Record of Decision. DEQ also wants to provide the ability for Huttig to complete this work in a safe manner consistent with state and federal requirements. Additionally, DEQ understands that the economic ramifications of the pandemic have yet to be fully realized, and additional time will ensure Huttig has the resources to fully implement the remedy. Because the next phase of cleanup activities cannot be completed during frozen soil conditions, the effect of delaying the start of cleanup activities by a few months, as requested in Huttig's letter, is that construction activities will likely be unable to be completed in 2020. DEQ agrees to Huttig's request to postpone implementation of the next phase of cleanup at the Facility with the following conditions:

1. No delay in groundwater sampling, groundwater reporting, or semi-annual progress reports is authorized. All routine monitoring and reporting activities must continue to be conducted on schedule.
2. Huttig must ensure that the grass portions of the former treatment area remain fenced and secured, by conducting an inspection of the fencing on a monthly basis and providing a summary of conditions to DEQ via e-mail no later than the 10th day of each month. If the area is found to not be secure, Huttig must take immediate action to secure the area.
3. No delays or changes to handling requirements for investigation-derived wastes (e.g. groundwater sampling purge water) is authorized. All investigation-derived wastes must continue to be stored, transported, and treated/disposed of in accordance with state and federal law and regulations.
4. By October 15, 2020, Huttig must provide DEQ with a written description of its financial plan for implementing the remaining aspects of the selected remedy in 2021 and demonstrate financial ability to conduct the required work.

5. All of the following activities must occur as early as possible during the 2021 construction season:
 - a. Construction of the land treatment unit.
 - b. Excavation of contaminated soils from the former treatment area and loading of the land treatment unit.
 - c. Confirmation sampling to demonstrate that soils have been removed consistent with the remediation work plan.
 - d. Backfill of the former treatment area with clean soil from a source approved by DEQ.
 - e. Routine operations of the land treatment unit, consistent with the remediation work plan.

6. Huttig must provide a letter to DEQ no later than January 15, 2021 to provide a detailed schedule to begin cleanup activities which ensures the actions above are completed as early as possible during the 2021 construction season. This letter must include a detailed list of contractors that Huttig has scheduled and the timeframes that Huttig anticipates starting and completing each step of the work required for the 2021 construction season. This letter must also include detailed plans that Huttig has prepared to complete the work during the 2021 construction season if travel limitations, cleaning requirements, or social distancing requirements are in place at that time due to COVID-19.

DEQ believes that the approach outlined above will ensure the Facility is cleaned up as required by the Record of Decision, while allowing Huttig time to adjust its operations and make plans to ensure remediation worker safety and economic availability to implement the remedy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. DEQ believes this approach and timeline to be reasonable; however, if Huttig does not provide the deliverables or implement the steps outlined in this letter, DEQ reserves the right to utilize the remedies for non-compliance that are included in the current unilateral administrative order. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at DNorris@mt.gov or (406) 444-6417.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Norris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Dan Norris
Project Officer

cc: Phil Keip, Huttig Building Products
Mark White, Terracon, Inc.
Bryan Douglass, Douglass, Inc.
Elena Evans, Missoula Valley Water Quality District
Andrew Vann, Trihydro
Moriah Bucy, DEQ
Wendy Johnson, DEQ Legal