ExxonMobil Assessed $43,984 Penalty For Failure To Address Contamination At Hadley Service Station Site

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) has assessed a penalty of $43,984 against the ExxonMobil Oil Corporation for the company’s failure to undertake cleanup actions in compliance with environmental regulations at the former Exxon Service Station location at 6 Goffe Street, Hadley.

ExxonMobil failed to undertake cleanup actions, including appropriate removal actions, containment of gasoline vapors, and control of dissolved gasoline in the groundwater at the site in an expeditious manner, despite the issuance of three prior Notices of Noncompliance by MassDEP. Although the release was identified in 1990, an active remedial system was not installed until 1999. The system that was installed in 1999 was ineffective, prone to frequent breakdowns, and required major modifications before it ran consistently. In addition, the system appears to have been improperly designed.

The failure by ExxonMobil to aggressively address this release resulted in the lack of a permanent cleanup solution and the uncontrolled migration of vapors and groundwater contamination down-gradient. On September 2, 2003, occupants of the building at 8 Goffe Street, the Hatch, Mott & McDonald building, located adjacent to the former Exxon Station, were evacuated by the Hadley Fire Department due to the presence of gasoline vapors in the indoor air.

In response to the above violations, MassDEP assessed ExxonMobil with the penalty of $43,984. MassDEP agreed to suspend $10,000 of the penalty if ExxonMobil complies with the terms and conditions of the consent order. As part of the order, ExxonMobil has agreed to excavate and remove soil from the area of the original release, conduct additional soil and groundwater assessment, and complete a soil gas survey before the end of 2005. In addition, ExxonMobil has agreed to complete all needed response actions at the site by September 15, 2006.

"Numerous opportunities have been provided to ExxonMobil to meet its obligations and the company has failed to do so. It is essential that timely and proper environmental cleanup occur to prevent threats to the public health and damage to the environment," said Michael Gorski, director of MassDEP’s Western Regional Office in Springfield. "Aggressive enforcement will continue until the site is properly addressed."

MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

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