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AG Kaul: Announces environmental judgment requiring Wisconsin Veneer and Plywood, Inc. pay a $75,000 penalty

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MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul announced today that his office has obtained a civil judgment against Wisconsin Veneer and Plywood, Inc. (Wisconsin Veneer) requiring it to pay a $75,000 monetary penalty for alleged violations of the State's air pollution control laws that occurred at Wisconsin Veneer's Shawano County manufacturing facility.

"Enforcing our air pollution laws isn't only important for the environment," said Attorney General Josh Kaul. "It also helps protect Wisconsinites' health and wellbeing."

According to the Complaint, the facility uses a wood fired boiler that combusts scrap veneer, sawdust, wood chips, and wood bark. Uncontrolled emissions from the boiler are vented to the atmosphere though a stack. On May 13 and 14, 2020, Wisconsin Veneer conducted a particulate emission stack test for the boiler. Results of the test showed that Wisconsin Veneer violated two particulate matter emission limitations contained in its air pollution control permit. Between May 13, 2020 and July 9, 2020, Wisconsin Veneer operated the boiler in a manner similar to how it was run during the stack test. Starting on July 10, 2020, the boiler was shut down for two weeks and several parts of the boiler were cleaned. Subsequent stack testing showed that Wisconsin Veneer had returned to compliance with its permit.

According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, particulate matter is made up of microscopic solids or liquid droplets that can cause serious heart and

lung problems when inhaled. Children, people with heart or lung diseases, and the elderly are especially at risk. Particulate matter released into the atmosphere can also have negative environmental effects, such as haze and damage to soil and/or water when the particles settle.

Assistant Attorney General Bradley J. Motl represented the State and worked closely with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to obtain this judgment. The Order for Judgment was signed by Shawano County Circuit Court Judge Katie Sloma on February 28, 2022.

Because this compromise was reached prior to the commencement of a civil action, requirements of 2017 Wisconsin Act 369 do not apply.

Press Release:
https://www.doj.state.wi.us/news-releases/ag-kaul-announces-environmental-judgment-requiring-wisconsin-veneer-and-plywood-inc