

facility utilizes activated sludge and clarification for waste water treatment.

In support of its Variance Petition Mobil alleges that it has expended \$1,250,000 on ammonia reduction efforts resulting in a decrease in ammonia discharge levels by 50% in the last four years, that its discharge conforms to best practical technology for all parameters and that, through recycling, its total effluent discharge has been reduced. These efforts have resulted in a very low treated discharge of about 15 gallons per barrel of crude processed. This low flow tends to increase the apparent concentration of pollutants. In addition Mobil alleges continuing efforts to reduce the ammonia discharge levels and that it is presently engaged in two research programs aimed at developing additional ammonia reduction techniques. Mobil wishes to discharge a monthly average of 41 mg/l and a daily maximum of 90 mg/l of ammonia nitrogen which, according to their figures, would increase ammonia nitrogen in the Des Plaines River by 0.015 mg/l during normal flow and 0.048 mg/l during the 7-day, 10-year low flow of 1.2 billion gallons per day.

In its Recommendation, the Agency indicates that although the 1.5 mg/l ammonia of water quality standard is being violated in the Des Plaines River, a grant of the variance at the levels requested by Mobil will have only a negligible environmental impact upon the River because of the huge dilution ratio (456:1) afforded. It is the Agency's opinion that it would be an arbitrary and unreasonable hardship on Mobil to force the expenditure of its resources in an attempt to achieve what must be considered a negligible improvement in the quality of the Des Plaines River. The Agency therefore recommends that Mobil be granted a variance from Rule 406 of Chapter 3 for one year subject to a number of conditions including interim limits and continued research efforts in order to develop a program which will result in compliance with Rule 406.

The Board agrees with the Agency's estimation of the situation. We find the prudent course to be to grant Mobil's Petition for Variance and include a requirement that it pursue research efforts with the objective of final compliance of Rule 406 in a reasonable manner. The Board shall therefore grant Mobil variance from Rule 406 for a period of one year subject to certain conditions.

This Opinion constitutes the findings of fact and conclusions of law of the Board in this matter.

ORDER

It is the Order of the Pollution Control Board that Mobil Oil Corporation be granted variance from Rule 406 of Chapter 3 of the Board's Regulations until July 1, 1978 for its refinery facility at Joliet, Illinois under the following conditions:

1. Mobil's ammonia nitrogen effluent discharge shall not exceed a monthly average discharge of 41 mg/l or a daily maximum of 90 mg/l.
2. Mobil shall make a good faith effort to develop a program which will permit compliance with Rule 406 of the Board's Regulations.
3. Mobil shall provide the Agency with progress reports every two months including a statement of its efforts to develop a successful ammonia nitrogen compliance program.
4. Within 35 days of the adoption of this Order, the Mobil Oil Corporation shall execute and forward to both the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, 2200 Churchill Road, Springfield, Illinois 62706 and the Pollution Control Board a Certification of Acceptance and agreement to be bound to all terms and conditions of this Order. The form of said certification shall be as follows:

CERTIFICATION

I (we), _____ having read and fully understanding the Order of the Illinois Pollution Control Board in PCB 77-22 hereby accept said Order and agree to be bound by all of the terms and conditions thereof.


SIGNED _____

TITLE _____

DATE _____

Mr. Dumelle concurs.

I, Christan L. Moffett, Clerk of the Illinois Pollution Control Board, hereby certify the above Opinion and Order were adopted on the 9th day of June, 1977 by a vote of 5-0.



Christan L. Moffett, Clerk
Illinois Pollution Control Board