

ILLINOIS POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

August 6, 2015

CITY OF COUNTRY CLUB HILLS,)	
COUNTRY CLUB HILLS, ILLINOIS,)	
)	
Petitioner,)	
)	
v.)	PCB 16-21
)	(Variance - Water)
ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL)	
PROTECTION AGENCY,)	
)	
Respondent.)	

OPINION AND ORDER OF THE BOARD (by C.K. Zalewski):

On July 21, 2015, the City of Country Club Hills (Country Club Hills) filed a petition for a variance from the Board’s chloride standards recently adopted in Water Quality Standards And Effluent Limitations For The Chicago Area Waterway System And Lower Des Plaines River Proposed Amendments To 35 Ill. Adm. Code 301, 302, 303, and 304, R08-9(D) (June 18, 2015) (“CAWS”). Specifically, Country Club Hills seeks a variance from the standards in Sections 302.407(g)(2) and 302.407(g)(3) of the Board’s water pollution regulations. 35 Ill. Adm. Code 302.407(g)(2), (g)(3). After providing background on variances and briefly outlining Country Club Hills’ petition, today’s order accepts the petition, and addresses deadlines for the recommendation of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Agency) and for the final decision of the Board.

PETITION

Under the Environmental Protection Act (Act) (415 ILCS 5/35-38 (2014)), the Board is responsible for granting variances when a petitioner demonstrates “that compliance with any rule or regulation, requirement or order of the Board would impose an arbitrary or unreasonable hardship” on petitioner. 415 ILCS 5/35(a) (2014); *see also* 415 ILCS 5/37(a) (2014) (burden of proof is on petitioner). A “variance is a temporary exemption from any specified rule, regulation, requirement or order of the Board.” 35 Ill. Adm. Code 104.200(a)(1). The Board may issue a variance, with or without conditions, for up to five years, but may extend a variance if petitioner shows that it has made satisfactory progress toward compliance. *See* 415 ILCS 5/36(a), (b) (2014). The Act requires the Agency to “make a recommendation to the Board as to the disposition of the petition.” 415 ILCS 5/37(a) (2014).

Country Club Hills is located in Cook County. The petition concerns Country Club Hills’ chloride discharges into the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS), more specifically discharges from its storm sewers and outfalls into CAWS. Country Club Hills states that the chloride standards adopted by the Board in CAWS “are not currently met on a consistent basis and cannot be met on a consistent basis during the term of the variance [5 years] that is being

requested here.” Pet. at 5. Country Club Hills argues that there are “only two ways that chloride levels in Country Club Hills’ discharges can be reduced: applying end-of-pipe controls, or reducing chloride inputs into the sewer system.” Pet. at 12. Country Club Hills states that reverse osmosis is the best option to reduce chloride at the end-of-pipe, but it is cost prohibitive and would take well beyond the 3 years currently provided to implement. Pet. at 12-13. Alternatively, Country Club Hills argues that the maximum 5-year variance period would allow for investigating ways to reduce chloride inputs into the sewer system and develop a compliance mechanism to address chloride issues. Pet. at 17. Country Club Hills argues that “the Board should consider issuing a variance and stay of the chloride standards that applies to all discharges into the CAWS, to ensure that the dischargers are not unfairly penalized,” in the case that a solution to the chloride issue is not available by July 1, 2018. Pet. at 4.

Country Club Hills has waived its right to a hearing in this matter. Pet. at 21. The Board accepts Country Club Hills’ petition for variance but makes no determination on the informational sufficiency or merits of the petition. *See* 35 Ill. Adm. Code 104.204, 104.208, 104.210. Though Country Club Hills waived hearing, there are circumstances under which the Board will nevertheless order a hearing on the petition. *See* 35 Ill. Adm. Code 104.234.

To ensure proper case management, the Board will assign a hearing officer to this proceeding. The assigned hearing officer is responsible for guiding the parties toward prompt resolution of this matter through whatever status calls and hearing officer orders he determines are necessary and appropriate. The Board, through orders of its own or its hearing officer, may direct Country Club Hills to provide additional information concerning the petition. If the Board fails to take final action by the decision deadline, currently November 18, 2015, Country Club Hills may deem the requested variance granted for a period not to exceed one year. *See* 415 ILCS 5/38(a) (2014). Only Country Club Hills may extend the decision deadline by waiver.

Section 37(a) of the Act requires petitioner to provide notice of the petition to:

any person in the county in which the installation or property for which variance is sought is located who has filed with the Board a written request for notice of variance petitions, the State's attorney of such county, the Chairman of the County Board of such county, and to each member of the General Assembly from the legislative district in which that installation or property is located, and shall publish a single notice of such petition in a newspaper of general circulation in such county. 415 ILCS 5/37(a) (2014).

The Board has not received proof that notice was provided pursuant to the Act and directs Country Club Hills to do so pursuant to Section 37(a) of the Act.

AGENCY RECOMMENDATION

Unless otherwise ordered by the hearing officer or the Board, the Agency is required to file its recommendation on the variance with the Board within 45 days after the filing of the petition, or at least 30 days prior to a scheduled hearing, whichever is earlier. *See* 35 Ill. Adm. Code 104.216(b). The Agency recommendation is currently due September 4, 2015, the 45th day after the petition was filed. Within 14 days after service of the Agency’s recommendation,

Country Club Hills may file a response to the Agency recommendation or an amended petition.
See 35 Ill. Adm. Code 104.220.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

I, John T. Therriault, Clerk of the Illinois Pollution Control Board, certify that the Board adopted the above order on August 6, 2015, by a vote of 5-0.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John T. Therriault". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

John T. Therriault, Clerk
Illinois Pollution Control Board