

ILLINOIS POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
February 1, 2024

ELECTRIC ENERGY, INC.,)	
)	
Petitioner,)	
)	
v.)	PCB 24-45
)	(Alternative Source
ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL)	Demonstration)
PROTECTION AGENCY,)	
)	
Respondent.)	
)	

ORDER OF THE BOARD (by M.D. Mankowski):

On December 22, 2023, Electric Energy, Inc. (Electric Energy) timely filed a petition (Pet.) asking the Board to review an alternative source demonstration determination (ASD) of the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Agency) under the coal combustion residual (CCR) surface impoundment rules in Part 845. See 35 Ill. Adm. Code 105.200 et. seq. and 845.650(e). The ASD determination concerns a CCR surface impoundment referred to as the Joppa East Ash Pond at Electric Energy’s Joppa Power Plant located west of the Village of Joppa, northeast of the Ohio River in Section 15 South, Range 3 East in Massac County (facility). Additionally, Electric Energy’s petition included a motion for a partial stay of Part 845 requirements as they apply to an exceedance of the cobalt and pH groundwater protection standards at the Joppa East Ash Pond. On January 4, 2024, the Board accepted the petition for hearing. IEPA says that it has no objection to the requested stay. For the reasons below, the Board now grants the petitioner’s unopposed request for a partial stay.

MOTION FOR PARTIAL STAY

Electric Energy’s petition for review included a motion for a partial stay of the requirements of 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.650(d), 845.660, 845.670, and 845.680 as they apply to the Cobalt exceedance and pH Exceedances at issue at the Joppa East Ash Pond. Pet. at 18. Electric Energy asks for a stay, “until the later of (a) the Board’s final resolution of this Petition, or (b) if this Petition is granted, IEPA’s issuance of a concurrence.” *Id.* In a January 19, 2024, motion for an extension of time to file the record, IEPA reports that it does not object to the requested stay. Mot. at 1. Part 845 provides that, “[t]he filing of a petition for review under subsection (e)(7) does not automatically stay any requirements of this Part as to the owner or operator, including the 90-day deadline to initiate an assessment of corrective measures.” 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845(e)(7).

Legal Background

The Board has used the following standards to determine whether it is appropriate to grant a discretionary stay:

1. a certain and clearly ascertainable right needs protection;
2. irreparable injury will occur without the injunction;
3. no adequate remedy at law exists; and
4. there is a probability of success on the merits.

See, Community Landfill Co. and City of Morris v. IEPA, PCB 01-48, 01-49 (consol.), slip op. at 4 (Oct. 19, 2000), *citing Motor Oils Refining Co. v. IEPA*, PCB 89-116, slip op. at 2 (Aug. 31, 1989).

The Board is not required to consider each of these factors in making its determination. *Bridgestone/Firestone Off Road Tire Co. v. IEPA*, PCB 02-31, slip op. at 3 (Nov. 1, 2001). “Although the Board may look to these factors in making its determination of whether to grant a discretionary stay, the likelihood of environmental harm should a stay be granted is of particular concern for the Board.” *Motor Oils Refining Co. v. IEPA*, PCB 89-116, slip op. at 2 (Aug. 31, 1989).

Electric Energy argues that a stay is needed to “protect [Electric Energy]’s right to appeal the IEPA Denial and to prevent [Electric Energy] from being unlawfully and unreasonably required to comply with costly and potentially unnecessary corrective measure requirements before it is able to exercise its right to appeal and be heard by the Board.” Pet. at 20.

Further, Electric Energy argues it will suffer irreparable injury if the requirements of Sections 845.650(d), 845.660, 845.670, and 845.680 for the Cobalt Exceedance and pH Exceedances at issue in this petition are not stayed. Pet. at 20. The Part 845 corrective action measures triggered by a release of a monitored constituent above the groundwater protection standards follow a step-by-step process starting with characterization of the nature and extent of the release through to the implementation of a corrective action plan. Following the denial of an ASD by IEPA, Part 845 requires the owner/operator to immediately initiate assessment of corrective action measures and complete the assessment within 90 days from the date of initiation. 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.660(a)(2). Further, owner/operators are required to develop a corrective action plan within one year from the date of completion of assessment of corrective action. 35 Ill. Adm. Code Section 845.670.

Electric Energy has estimated that the cost of assessing corrective measures would be \$35,000 and that the cost of selecting an appropriate remedy and developing a corrective action plan would be \$400,000. Pet. at 20. “If [Electric Energy] complied with the corrective measure requirements for cobalt and pH at the Joppa EAP and then succeeded on the merits of this Petition, costs, as well as time and other resources would be lost.” *Id.*

Electric Energy argues it has, “no other adequate remedy at law to prevent these injuries or to contest the IEPA Denial.” Pet. at 20. Additionally, Electric Energy argues it is likely that it will succeed on the merits of the petition. *Id.*

Corrective Action Measures From Which a Stay is Requested

Electric Energy requests a stay from the corrective action measures that were triggered by the cobalt exceedance at a single monitoring well, and pH exceedances at two monitoring wells located upgradient from the Joppa East Ash Pond. Pet. at 23. Section 845.650(d) requires Electric Energy to characterize the nature and extent of the release “to support a complete and accurate assessment of the corrective measures necessary to effectively clean up all releases from the CCR surface impoundment under Section 845.660”. 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.650(d)(1). This characterization, which involves collection of data on the nature and estimated quantity of the chemical released, requires installation of an additional monitoring well or wells, and sampling of groundwater.

Section 845.660 requires Electric Energy to “initiate an assessment of corrective measures to prevent further releases, to remediate any releases, and to restore the affected area.” 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.660(a). This assessment entails an analysis of the effectiveness of potential corrective measures in meeting the requirements and objectives of the corrective action plan by evaluating the performance, reliability, ease of implementation, and potential impacts of appropriate potential remedies, time required to implement the plan as well as the institutional requirements, including state or local permits. 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.660(c). As noted by Electric Energy, the estimated cost of the assessment of corrective action measures is \$35,000. Pet. Exh. E at 2.

Following the assessment of corrective action measures, Electric Energy must develop a corrective action plan identifying the selected remedy under Section 845.670. Additionally, Electric Energy must include corrective action alternatives analysis as well as an implementation schedule for timely completion of the remedial activities. 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.670 (e) and (f). Electric Energy estimates the cost of developing a corrective action plan in compliance with Section 845.670 would cost about \$400,000. Pet. Exh. E at 2. Finally, within 90 days after the Agency's approval of the corrective action plan, Electric Energy must initiate corrective action and implement the selected remedy as specified in Section 845.680.

Board Discussion and Findings

In reviewing Electric Energy's unopposed motion for a partial stay, the Board is persuaded that Electric Energy has an ascertainable right that requires protection. The appeal of a final agency decision on alternative source demonstrations would be rendered moot if a petitioner was required to comply with the contested sections during the pendency of the appeal. The Board also agrees that this appeal is the remedy at law available to Electric Energy to challenge the denial of the ASD.


The Board concludes that a stay of Sections 845.650(d), 845.660, 845.670, and 845.680 will not increase the likelihood of harm to human health or to the environment as there is no exposure pathway for the Joppa East Ash Pond to impact residential drinking water or irrigation sources. Pet. at 21-22. Electric Energy reports that it has conducted a human health and risk

assessment for the Joppa East Ash Pond that demonstrated, “there was no indication of any residential use of groundwater for drinking water that could be impacted by the Joppa East Ash Pond, and no other exposure pathway presented a significant risk.” Pet. at 21-22, *citing* Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment, East Ash Pond, Joppa Power Plant, Joppa, Illinois at 22, 31 (Jul. 28, 2022).¹ However, the Board stresses that the Joppa Power Plant will continue to be subject to the groundwater monitoring requirements of 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.650. This will ensure that there will be timely detection of any additional changes in groundwater quality during the stay.

As IEPA does not object to the requested stay, exercising its discretion, the Board grants Electric Energy’s unopposed request and stays the applicability of 35 Ill. Adm. Code 845.650(d), 845.660, 845.670, and 845.680 as they apply to the exceedance of the cobalt and pH groundwater protection standards at the Joppa East Ash Pond. In doing so, the Board makes no findings on the merits of the petition. The partial stay will remain in effect until the Board takes final action in this matter or until the Board orders otherwise.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

I, Don A. Brown, Clerk of the Illinois Pollution Control Board, certify that the Board adopted the above order on February 1, 2024, by a vote of 4-0.



Don A. Brown, Clerk
Illinois Pollution Control Board

¹ The risk assessment can be found at: <https://www.luminant.com/documents/ccr/Illinois/Joppa/2022/Joppa%20EAP%20Construction%20Permit%20Application.pdf> (visited January 24, 2024).