



## **Firestone Polymers Agrees to Settle Multiple Environmental Claims at its Sulfur, La., Rubber Manufacturing Plant**

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**DALLAS** – (September 30, 2021) The Department of Justice (DOJ), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) announced Firestone Polymers, LLC (Firestone) has agreed to resolve alleged violations of the Clean Air Act and several other federal and state environmental laws at the company’s synthetic rubber manufacturing facility in Sulfur, Louisiana. The company will also pay a total of \$3.35 million in civil penalties.

The settlement requires several actions from Firestone, including meeting emissions limits, operating and maintenance requirements, equipment controls, limiting hazardous air pollutants from facility dryers, conducting inspections of heat exchangers, installing controls and monitors on covered flares, and installing flaring instrumentation and monitoring systems. After being notified of the violations but prior to the consent decree being lodged, Firestone took other compliance measures, including installing and operating a regenerative thermal oxidizer system to receive waste gases from dryers, reducing n-hexane solvent concentrations, and inspecting and testing heat exchangers.

DOJ, on behalf of EPA and co-plaintiff LDEQ, filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana. The complaint alleges that the facility emitted excess amounts of pollutants including nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, and hazardous air pollutants including 1,3-butadiene, n-hexane, styrene, formaldehyde, methanol, and others and failed to comply with requirements related to equipment such as dryers, cooling towers, and flares; leak detection and repair; mechanical integrity; and monitoring and reporting. The complaint also asserts violations of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act; the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act; the Pollution Prevention Act; and Louisiana state air pollution control requirements.

“This settlement will ensure cleaner air for the citizens of Louisiana and the communities near Firestone’s plant,” said Assistant Attorney General Todd Kim of the Justice Department’s Environment and Natural Resources Division. “It also enforces the company’s obligation to inform local communities of potential chemical hazards to aid state and local efforts to control accidental releases.”

“Businesses such as Firestone Polymers have a sacred obligation to protect Louisiana’s environment and to use our natural resources wisely,” stated Acting U.S. Attorney Alexander C. Van Hook for the Western District of Louisiana. “This settlement sends a clear message that those who don’t honor this obligation will be held accountable.”

“The Clean Air Act is vital to protecting people’s health, and the Sulfur Firestone facility violated these protections as Louisiana’s highest emitter of three types of hazardous air pollutants,” said Acting Regional Administrator David Gray of the EPA. “EPA’s legal and enforcement team, working with DOJ and LDEQ, held the company accountable for reducing emissions, and won additional benefits for environmental justice communities in Southwest Louisiana with improved air monitoring systems. I congratulate our team for their hard work on behalf of the people of Louisiana.”

“The violations detailed in the complaint represent Firestone’s disregard for the Clean Air Act, which is an underlying authority for environmental regulation in the United States” said Secretary Dr. Chuck Carr Brown of LDEQ. “LDEQ and our federal partner, EPA, will vigorously pursue any violators of the CAA. These penalties and the beneficial environmental project under the consent decree are the result of our efforts. The beneficial environmental project’s funds will be used to support additional ambient air monitoring in the Westlake and southwest Louisiana areas, which will assist LDEQ’s efforts to improve air quality for these communities.”

As part of the consent decree, Firestone will pay a civil penalty of \$2,098,678.50 to the United States and \$1,251,321.50 to LDEQ for a total of \$3,350,000. Firestone will also complete a Beneficial Environmental Project in Louisiana by funding ambient air monitoring system upgrades in several locations in Southwest Louisiana.

The consent decree was lodged with the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Louisiana and is subject to a 30-day public comment period and final court approval. A copy of the decree will be available on the Department of Justice website at: [www.justice.gov/enrd/consent-decrees](http://www.justice.gov/enrd/consent-decrees).

For more about the Clean Air Act: <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-air-act>

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