

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6**

**1201 Elm Street, Suite 500
Dallas, Texas 75270**

In the Matter of

Freeport LNG Development, L.P.,

Respondent.

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Docket No. CAA-06-2024-3307

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER

Preliminary Statement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6 (“EPA” or “Complainant”), and Freeport LNG Development, L.P. (“Respondent”) have agreed to a settlement of this action before the filing of a complaint, and thus this action is simultaneously commenced and concluded pursuant to Rules 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2) of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.13(b) and 22.18(b)(2).

Jurisdiction

1. This proceeding is an administrative action for the assessment of civil penalties instituted pursuant to Section 113(d) of the Clean Air Act (“CAA”), 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d).
2. This Consent Agreement and Final Order serves as notice that the EPA has reason to believe that Respondent has violated the Chemical Accident Prevention Provisions in 40 C.F.R. Part 68, promulgated pursuant to Section 112(r) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r), and that Respondent is therefore in violation of Section 112(r)(7) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(7). Furthermore, this Consent Agreement and Final Order serves as notice pursuant to

Section 113(d)(2)(A) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d)(2)(A), and 40 C.F.R. § 22.34, of the EPA's intent to issue an order assessing penalties for these violations.

Parties

3. Complainant is the Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division of EPA, Region 6, as duly delegated by the Administrator of the EPA and the Regional Administrator, EPA, Region 6.

4. Respondent is Freeport LNG Development, L.P., a limited partnership formed in the state of Delaware and conducting business in the state of Texas.

Statutory and Regulatory Background

5. On November 15, 1990, the President signed into law the CAA Amendments of 1990. The Amendments added Section 112(r) to Title I of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r). The objective of Section 112(r) is to prevent the accidental release and to minimize the consequences of any such release of any substance listed pursuant to Section 112(r)(3) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(3), or any other extremely hazardous substance.

6. Pursuant to Section 112(r)(1) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(1), commonly referred to as the General Duty Clause, owners and operators of stationary sources producing, processing, handling or storing substances listed pursuant to Section 112(r)(3) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(3), or any other extremely hazardous substance, have a general duty in the same manner and the same extent as the Occupational Safety and Health Act, 29 U.S.C. § 654 et. seq., to identify hazards which may result from accidental releases using appropriate hazard assessment techniques, to design and maintain a safe facility, taking such steps as are necessary to prevent releases, and to minimize the consequences of accidental releases which do occur.

7. Section 112(r)(3) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(3), requires the Administrator

to promulgate a list of regulated substances which, in the case of an accidental release, are known to cause or may reasonably be anticipated to cause death, injury, or serious adverse effects to human health or the environment. Section 112(r)(5) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(5), that requires that the Administrator to establish a threshold quantity for any substance listed pursuant to Section 112(r)(3) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(3). The list of regulated substances and respective threshold quantities is codified at 40 C.F.R. § 68.130.

8. Section 112(r)(7) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(7), requires the Administrator to promulgate regulations that address release prevention, detection, and correction requirements for stationary sources with threshold quantities of regulated substances listed pursuant to Section 112(r)(3) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(3). On June 20, 1996, EPA promulgated a final rule known as the Risk Management Program, 40 C.F.R. Part 68 – Chemical Accident Prevention Provisions, which implements Section 112(r)(7) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(7).

9. The regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 68 require owners and operators to develop and implement a Risk Management Program at each stationary source with over a threshold quantity of regulated substances. The Risk Management Program must include, among other things, a hazard assessment, a prevention program, and an emergency response program. The Risk Management Program is described in a Risk Management Plan (RMP) that must be submitted to the EPA.

10. Pursuant to Section 112(r)(7) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(7), and 40 C.F.R. § 68.150, an RMP must be submitted for all covered processes by the owner or operator of a stationary source subject to 40 C.F.R. Part 68 no later than the latter of June 21, 1999, or the date on which a regulated substance is first present above the threshold quantity in a process.

11. The regulations at 40 C.F.R. § 68.10 set forth how the Chemical Accident

Prevention Provisions of 40 C.F.R. Part 68 apply to each program level of covered processes.

Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 68.10(i), a covered process is subject to Program 3 requirements if the process does not meet the requirements of Program 1, as described in 40 C.F.R. § 68.10(g), and if it is in a specified North American Industrial Classification System code or is subject to the OSHA process safety management standard, 29 C.F.R. 1910.119.

12. Section 113(d) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d), states that the Administrator may issue an administrative order against any person assessing a civil administrative penalty of up to \$25,000 per day of violation whenever, on the basis of any available information, the Administrator finds that such person has violated or is violating any requirement or prohibition of Section 112(r) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r), and its implementing regulations. The Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996, 31 U.S.C. § 3701, as amended, and the Federal Civil Penalties Inflation Adjustment Act Improvements Act of 2015, 28 U.S.C. § 2461, and implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 19, increased these statutory maximum penalties to \$37,500 for violations that occurred before November 2, 2015, and to \$55,808 for violations that occur after November 2, 2015, and are assessed after January 6, 2023.

Definitions

13. Section 302(e) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7602(e), defines “person” to include any individual, corporation, partnership, association, State, municipality, political subdivision of a State, and any agency department, or instrumentality of the United States and any officer, agent, or employee thereof.

14. Section 112(r)(2)(A) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(2)(A), and the regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 68.3 defines “accidental release” as an unanticipated emission of a regulated substance or other extremely hazardous substance into the ambient air from a stationary source.

15. Section 112(r)(2)(C) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(2)(C), and the regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 68.3 defines “stationary source,” in part, as any buildings, structures, equipment, installations or substance-emitting stationary activities which belong to the same industrial group, which are located on one or more contiguous properties, which are under the control of the same person (or persons under common control), and from which an accidental release may occur.

16. Section 112(r)(2)(B) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(2)(B), and the regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 68.3 defines “regulated substance” as any substance listed pursuant to Section 112(r)(3) of the CAA, as amended, in 40 C.F.R. § 68.130.

17. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 68.3 defines “threshold quantity” as the quantity specified for regulated substances pursuant to Section 112(r)(5) of the CAA, as amended, listed in 40 C.F.R. § 68.130 and determined to be present at a stationary source as specified in 40 C.F.R. § 68.115.

18. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 68.3 defines “process” as any activity involving a regulated substance including any use, storage, manufacturing, handling or on-site movement of such substances, or combination of these activities. For the purposes of this definition, any group of vessels that are interconnected, or separate vessels that are located such that a regulated substance could be involved in a potential release, shall be considered a single process.

19. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 68.3 defines “covered process” as a process that has a regulated substance present in more than a threshold quantity as determined under 40 C.F.R. § 68.115.

EPA Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

20. Respondent is, and at all times referred to herein was, a “person” as defined by Section 302(e) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7602(e).

21. Respondent is the owner and operator of a facility located at: 2363 County Road 690, Freeport, Texas 77541 (the “Facility”).

22. Pursuant to Section 114 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7414, the EPA conducted an inspection of the Facility from July, 18, 2023 to July 20, 2023, to determine Respondent’s compliance with Section 112(r) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r), and 40 C.F.R. Part 68 (the “Inspection”).

23. On August 15, 2023, the EPA sent Respondent a Notice of Potential Violation and Opportunity to Confer letter. On October 24, 2023, the EPA responded to the documentation and information received from Respondent as a result of the opportunity to confer and articulated the EPA’s position concerning Respondent’s compliance with Section 112(r) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r).

24. The Facility is a “stationary source” pursuant to Section 112(r)(2)(C) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(2)(C), and the regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 68.3.

25. Respondent has a liquid natural gas pretreatment process at the Facility, meeting the definition of “process”, as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 68.3.

26. Respondent receives natural gas by pipeline and pretreats the natural gas to remove carbon dioxide, sulfur compounds, water, mercury, and heavy hydrocarbons. The regulated substance under 40 C.F.R. Part 68 Chemical Accident RMP regulations is Natural Gas Liquid (NGL) condensate, a mixture of regulated flammable gas hydrocarbons. The components of the NGL condensate are present at or above the minimum threshold for RMP applicability.

NGL condensate is comprised of varying percentages of methane, ethane, propane, and pentane, each of which are flammable substances (the “Regulated Flammable Substances”). As a result, Respondent produces, processes, handles, and stores the Regulated Flammable Substances at the Facility.

27. The Regulated Flammable Substances are substances listed pursuant to Section 112(r)(3) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(3), in 40 C.F.R. § 68.130.

28. From the time Respondent first produced, processed, handled, or stored listed substance at the Facility, Respondent was subject to the requirements of the General Duty Clause in Section 112(r)(1) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(1).

29. The Regulated Flammable Substances are “regulated substances” pursuant to Section 112(r)(2)(B) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(2)(B), and the regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 68.3. The threshold quantity for each of the Regulated Flammable Substances, as listed in 40 C.F.R. § 68.130, is 10,000 pounds.

30. Respondent has greater than a threshold quantity of the Regulated Flammable Substances in a process at the Facility, meeting the definition of “covered process” as defined by 40 C.F.R. § 68.3.

31. From the time Respondent first had on-site greater than a threshold quantity of the Regulated Flammable Substances in a process, Respondent was subject to the requirements of Section 112(r)(7) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(7), and 40 C.F.R. Part 68 because it was the owner or operator of a stationary source that had more than a threshold quantity of a regulated substance in a process.

32. From the time Respondent first had on-site greater than a threshold quantity of the Regulated Flammable Substances in a process, Respondent was required to submit an RMP

pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 68.12(a) and comply with the Program 3 prevention requirements because pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 68.10(i), the covered process at the Facility did not meet the eligibility requirements of Program 1, is in North American Industry Classification System code 211112, and is subject to the OSHA process safety management standard, 29 C.F.R. § 1910.119.

EPA Findings of Violation

33. The facts stated in the EPA Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law above are herein incorporated.

34. Complainant hereby states and alleges that Respondent has violated the CAA and federal regulations promulgated thereunder as follows:

Count 1 – The General Duty Clause

35. Pursuant to Section 112(r)(1) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(1), the owners and operators of stationary sources producing, processing, handling or storing such substances [i.e., a chemical in 40 C.F.R. part 68 or any other extremely hazardous substance] have a general duty [in the same manner and to the same extent as the general duty clause in the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA)] to identify hazards which may result from (such) releases using appropriate hazard assessment techniques, to design and maintain a safe facility taking such steps as are necessary to prevent releases, and to minimize the consequences of accidental releases which do occur.

36. Respondent failed to identify hazards using appropriate hazard assessment techniques, and thus, failed to maintain a safe facility. This failure to maintain a safe facility resulted in an incident on June 8, 2022, caused by the closure of certain valves on Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) piping, thereby trapping LNG in a pipe, which led to overpressure and explosion that released flammable methane to the atmosphere. The explosion caused approximately \$275

million in damage to Respondent's liquefaction facility. No deaths, injuries or evacuations were reported by Freeport LNG as a result of the incident. Prior to the inspection, EPA was provided confidential business information documents regarding the direct root cause and contributing causal factors of the incident.

37. Respondent's failure to design and maintain a safe facility taking such steps as are necessary to prevent a release is a violation of Section 112(r)(1) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(1).

Count 2 – Process Hazard Analysis

38. The regulation at 40 C.F.R. § 68.12(d)(3) requires the owner or operator of a stationary source with a process subject to Program 3 to implement the prevention requirements of 40 C.F.R. §§ 68.65 through 68.87. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 68.67(e), the owner or operator shall establish a system to promptly address the process hazard analyses team's findings and recommendations; assure that the recommendations are resolved in a timely manner and that the resolution is documented; document what actions are to be taken; complete actions as soon as possible; develop a written schedule of when these actions are to be completed; communicate the actions to operating, maintenance and other employees whose work assignments are in the process and who may be affected by the recommendations or actions.

39. Respondent failed to promptly address the Process Hazard Analysis (PHA) team's 12 recommendations identified in the report for the PHA conducted in 2021. At the time of the inspection, 7 were still open and 5 were unresolved.

40. Respondent's failure to promptly address the team's findings and recommendations, assure that the recommendations were resolved in a timely manner, and complete actions as soon as possible pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 68.67(e), as required by 40 C.F.R. § 68.12(d)(3), is a violation of Section 112(r)(7) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(7).

Count 3 – Emergency Contact Information

41. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 68.195(b), beginning June 21, 2004, within one month of any change in the emergency contact information required under § 68.160(b)(6), the owner or operator shall submit a correction of that information.

42. Freeport PTF failed to update its RMP emergency contact information within one month after the individual assigned as the emergency contact retired in June 2022.

43. Respondent's failure to update its RMP emergency contact information within one month of any change pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 68.195(b), is a violation of Section 112(r)(7) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r)(7).

CONSENT AGREEMENT

44. For the purpose of this proceeding, as required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2),
Respondent:

- a. admits the jurisdictional allegations set forth herein;
- b. neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations stated herein;
- c. consents to the assessment of a civil penalty, as stated herein;
- d. consents to the issuance of any specified compliance or corrective action order;
- e. consents to any conditions specified herein;
- f. consents to any stated Permit Action;
- g. waives any right to contest the allegations set forth herein; and
- h. waives its rights to appeal the Final Order accompanying this Consent Agreement.

45. Respondent consents to the issuance of this Consent Agreement and Final Order

and consents for the purposes of settlement to the payment of the civil penalty specified herein.

46. Respondent and EPA agree to conciliate this matter without the necessity of a formal hearing and to bear their respective costs and attorneys' fees.

Penalty Payment

47. Respondent agrees that, in settlement of the claims alleged herein, Respondent shall pay a civil penalty of One Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand Fifty-Four Dollars (\$163,054).

48. Respondent shall pay the penalty within thirty (30) days of the effective date of the Final Order. Such payment shall identify Respondent by name and docket number and shall be by certified or cashier's check made payable to the "United States Treasury" and sent to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Fines and Penalties
Cincinnati Finance Center
PO Box 979078
St. Louis, Missouri 63197-9000

or by alternate payment method described at <http://www.epa.gov/financial/makepayment>.

49. A copy of the check or other information confirming payment shall simultaneously be sent electronically by email to the following:

Lorena S. Vaughn
Regional Hearing Clerk
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500 (ORC)
Dallas, Texas 75270-2102
vaughn.lorena@epa.gov; and

Tony Robledo
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division
Air Enforcement Branch
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500 (ECDAC)
Dallas, Texas 75270-2101
robledo.tony@epa.gov

50. Respondent understands that its failure to timely pay any portion of the civil

penalty may result in the commencement of a civil action in Federal District Court to recover the full remaining balance, along with penalties and accumulated interest. In such case, interest shall begin to accrue on a civil or stipulated penalty from the date of delinquency until such civil or stipulated penalty and any accrued interest are paid in full. 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(b)(1). Interest will be assessed at a rate of the United States Treasury Tax and loan rates in accordance with 31 U.S.C. § 3717. Additionally, a charge will be assessed to cover the costs of debt collection including processing and handling costs, and a non-payment penalty charge of six percent (6%) per year compounded annually will be assessed on any portion of the debt which remains delinquent more than ninety (90) days after payment is due. 31 U.S.C. § 3717(e)(2).

Effect of Settlement and Reservation of Rights

51. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall only resolve Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations alleged herein. Complainant reserves the right to take any enforcement action with respect to any other violations of the CAA or any other applicable law.

52. The effect of settlement described in the immediately preceding paragraph is conditioned upon the accuracy of Respondent's representations to the EPA, as memorialized in paragraph directly below.

53. Respondent certifies by the signing of this Consent Agreement that it is presently in compliance with all requirements of Section 112(r) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7412(r).

54. Full payment of the penalty proposed in this Consent Agreement shall not in any case affect the right of the Agency or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law. This Consent Agreement and Final Order does not waive, extinguish or otherwise affect Respondent's obligation to comply

with all applicable provisions of the CAA and regulations promulgated thereunder.

55. Complainant reserves the right to enforce the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

General Provisions

56. By signing this Consent Agreement, the undersigned representative of Respondent certifies that it is fully authorized to execute and enter into the terms and conditions of this Consent Agreement and has the legal capacity to bind the party it represents to this Consent Agreement.

57. This Consent Agreement shall not dispose of the proceeding without a final order from the Regional Judicial Officer or Regional Administrator ratifying the terms of this Consent Agreement. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall be effective upon filing of the Final Order by the Regional Hearing Clerk for EPA, Region 6. Unless otherwise stated, all time periods stated herein shall be calculated in calendar days from such date.

58. The terms, conditions and requirements of this Consent Agreement and Final Order may not be modified or amended except unless agreed to in writing between the EPA and Respondent and filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

59. The penalty specified herein shall represent civil penalties assessed by EPA and shall not be deductible for purposes of Federal, State, and local taxes.

60. This Consent Agreement and Final Order shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent and Respondent's agents, successors and/or assigns. Respondent shall ensure that all contractors, employees, consultants, firms, or other persons or entities acting for Respondent with respect to matters included herein comply with the terms of this Consent Agreement and Final Order.

61. The EPA and Respondent agree to the use of electronic signatures for this matter pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.6. The EPA and Respondent further agree to electronic service of this Consent Agreement and Final Order by email to the following:

To EPA: *george.elizabeth.a@epa.gov*

To Respondent: *sottis@freeportlng.com*

**RESPONDENT:
FREEPORT LNG DEVELOPMENT, L.P.**

Date: 12/04/2023


Signature



S.L. Cornelius
Print Name

President
Title

**COMPLAINANT:
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

Date: December 8, 2023

Cheryl T. Seager
Director
Enforcement and
Compliance Assurance Division
U.S. EPA, Region 6

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to Section 113(d) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d), and the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, the foregoing Consent Agreement resolving this matter is hereby ratified and incorporated by reference into this Final Order.

Respondent is ORDERED to comply with all of the terms of the Consent Agreement. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b), the effective date of the foregoing Consent Agreement and this Final Order is the date on which this Final Order is filed with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

This Final Order shall resolve only those causes of action alleged in the Consent Agreement. Nothing in this Final Order shall be construed to waive, extinguish, or otherwise affect Respondent's (or its officers, agents, servants, employees, successors, or assigns) obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, including the regulations that were the subject of this action.

IT IS SO ORDERED.

Thomas Rucki
Regional Judicial Officer

Date

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was transmitted to the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. EPA, Region 6, 1201 Elm Street, Dallas, Texas 75270-2102, and that a true and correct copy was sent this day in the following manner to the addressees:

Copy via Email to Complainant:

george.elizabeth.a@epa.gov

Copy via Email to Respondent:

sottis@freeportlng.com

Copy via Email to the Regional Hearing Clerk:

vaughn.lorena@epa.gov

Signed
Office of Regional Counsel
U.S. EPA, Region 6