

## **SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT**

This Settlement Agreement is entered into between the California Air Resources Board (CARB), with its principal location at 1001 I Street, Sacramento, California 95814; and Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility, with its principal location at 12021 Hunt Road, Farmington, CA 95230 (collectively, the "Parties," or individually, "Party").

### **LEGAL BACKGROUND**

- (1) Purpose. The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 mandates CARB to adopt regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to enforce those regulations. (Health & Saf. Code §§ 38560, 38562, and 38580). CARB is also mandated to reduce methane emissions by 40% below 2013 levels by 2030. (Health & Saf. Code § 39730.5.)
- (2) Regulation. CARB adopted the regulation, *Methane Emissions from Municipal Solid Waste Landfills* (LMR) to reduce methane emissions from municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 17, § 95460 et seq.)
- (3) Regulatory Provisions. Any owner or operator of a MSW landfill with 450,000 tons or more of waste in place and a calculated landfill gas heat input capacity greater than or equal to 3.0 million British thermal units per hour (MMBtu/hr), that received solid waste after January 1, 1977 must comply with the LMR requirements, including surface emission monitoring, installation of emission controls, recordkeeping, and reporting. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 17, §§ 95460 et seq.)
- (4) Penalty Provisions. Failure to comply with the regulatory requirements is a violation of state law that may result in penalties up to eleven thousand seven hundred ten dollars (\$12,180.00 USD) for strict liability violations, respectively, for each day in which the violation occurs. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 17, § 95460 et seq.; Health & Saf. Code §§ 38580, 42400 et seq., 42402 et seq., 42410 and 42411.)

### **CASE BACKGROUND**

- (5) Corporate Entity. At all relevant times, Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility was organized under the laws of California as a publicly-owned municipality and conducted business in the State of California.
- (6) Allegations. CARB alleges that Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility violated the LMR by owning or operating a MSW landfill in California with greater than 450,000 tons of waste in place and a calculated landfill gas heat input capacity equal to or greater than 3.0 MMBtu/hr. that has accepted waste after January 1, 1977, and failing to operate the gas control device within the temperature parameter range established by the source test for reporting year 2021 over a period of 37 calendar days (234 hours of non-compliance), and reporting year 2022 over a period of 96 calendar

days (276 hours of non-compliance), as outlined in Notice of Violation: LMR-2022-02. CARB alleges that if paragraphs 1 through 6 were proven, civil penalties could be imposed against Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility for violations of the LMR.

- (7) Acknowledgment. Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility admits to the facts in paragraphs 1 through 6, but denies any liability resulting from said allegations.
- (8) Consideration. In consideration of the foregoing, and of the promises and facts set forth herein, the Parties desire to settle and resolve all claims, disputes, and obligations relating to the above-listed alleged violations and voluntarily agree to resolve this matter by means of this Settlement Agreement. In order to resolve the violations described herein, Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility has taken, or agrees to take, the actions enumerated below within the Terms and Conditions. Further, CARB accepts this Settlement Agreement in termination and full settlement of this matter.

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

In consideration of CARB not filing a legal action against Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility for the alleged violations referred to above in the Legal Background and Case Background, and Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility's agreement to complete all terms and conditions set forth below, CARB and Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility agree as follows:

- (9) Settlement Amount. Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility shall pay a civil penalty of eighteen thousand six hundred sixty-three dollars (\$18,663.00 USD), and agrees to fund a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) entitled "Residential Air Filtration Program" in the amount of eighteen thousand six hundred sixty-three dollars (\$18,663.00 USD), consistent with CARB's SEP Policy, for a total settlement of thirty-seven thousand three hundred twenty-six dollars (\$37,326.00 USD). Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility shall make all payments within thirty (30) calendar days from the Notification Date.
- (10) Notification Date. The date upon which CARB notifies Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility according to Paragraph 16 (Notices), that the Settlement Agreement is fully executed or when CARB sends the fully executed Settlement Agreement to Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility.
- (11) Civil Penalty Payment Method. Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility shall pay the civil penalty by check, credit card, wire transfer, or portal, payable to the "California Air Resources Board," using instructions provided separately by CARB in a Payment Transmittal Form. Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility is responsible for all payment processing fees. Payments shall be accompanied by the Payment Transmittal Form to ensure proper application. CARB shall deposit the civil

penalty amount into the Air Pollution Control Fund for the purpose of carrying out CARB's duties and functions to ensure the integrity of its air pollution control programs. Should payment instructions change; CARB will provide notice to Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility in accordance with Paragraph 16 (Notices).

- (12) SEP Payment Method(s). Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility shall fund the SEP by check payable to the SEP Recipient/Administrator, San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District using instructions provided separately by CARB in a SEP Payment Transmittal Form. Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility is responsible for all payment processing fees. Payments shall be accompanied by the SEP Payment Transmittal Form to ensure proper application. Should payment instructions change, CARB will provide notice to Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility in accordance with Paragraph 16 (Notices).
- (13) Prohibition Against Financial Benefit. Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility has agreed that by funding the SEP entitled Residential Air Filtration Program, Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility will not receive any direct or indirect financial benefit, and that whenever Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility publicizes or refers to the SEP or the results of the SEP, Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility will state that the SEP is being undertaken as part of the settlement of a CARB enforcement action.
- (14) Assignment of Rights. In the event the SEP Recipient/Administrator does not fully implement or complete the SEP in accordance with the terms of the SEP Agreement, CARB shall be entitled to recover the full amount of the SEP from the SEP Recipient/Administrator, less any amount expended on the timely and successful completion of any previously agreed upon interim milestone(s). CARB will deposit any such recovery into the Air Pollution Control Fund. Accordingly, Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility assigns any and all rights against the SEP Recipient/Administrator to CARB.
- (15) Documents. Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility shall promptly email or mail the signed and dated Settlement Agreement to the address or email in Paragraph 16 (Notices).
- (16) Notices. Unless otherwise specified in this Settlement Agreement, whenever notifications, submissions, or communications are required by this Settlement Agreement, they shall be submitted in writing to the address or email below:

As to CARB:

California Air Resources Board  
Enforcement Division / Settlement Agreements  
Field Operations Branch / Short-Lived Climate Pollutant Enforcement  
Section  
P.O. Box 2815  
Sacramento, California 95812-2815  
Settlement\_Agreement@arb.ca.gov

As to Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility:

Teresa Hitchcock, Chief Executive Officer  
12021 Hunt Road  
Farmington, CA 95230  
THitchcock@co.calaveras.ca.us

Any Party may, by written notice to the other Parties, change its designated notice recipient or notice address provided above. Notices submitted pursuant to this section shall be deemed submitted upon emailing or mailing.

- (17) Repeat Violations. Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility agrees to comply with all regulatory requirements and acknowledges that repeat violations could result in increased penalties in the future.
- (18) Entirety. This Settlement Agreement constitutes the entire agreement and understanding between the Parties concerning the Case Background and supersedes and replaces any and all prior negotiations and agreements of any kind, whether written or oral, between the Parties concerning the Case Background hereof. This Settlement Agreement consists of 8 pages and 36 numbered paragraphs.
- (19) Binding Effect. This Settlement Agreement binds Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility, and any principals, officers, receivers, trustees, successors and assignees, subsidiary and parent corporations and CARB and any successor agency that may have responsibility for and jurisdiction over the subject matter of this Settlement Agreement.
- (20) Effective Date. The effective date shall be the date upon which this Settlement Agreement is fully executed.
- (21) Modification and Termination. No agreement to modify, amend, extend, supersede, terminate, or discharge this Settlement Agreement, or any portion thereof, is valid or enforceable unless it is in writing and signed by all Parties to this Settlement Agreement.

- (22) Severability. Each provision of this Settlement Agreement is severable, and in the event that any provision of this Settlement Agreement is held to be illegal, invalid or unenforceable in any jurisdiction, the remainder of this Settlement Agreement remains in full force and effect.
- (23) Choice of Law. This Settlement Agreement shall be interpreted and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of California, without regard to California's choice-of-law rules.
- (24) Non-Discharge. It is further agreed that the penalties described in this Settlement Agreement are non-dischargeable under United States Code, title 11, section 523(a)(7), which provides an exception from discharge for any debt to the extent such debt is for a fine, penalty, or forfeiture payable to and for the benefit of a governmental unit.
- (25) Rules of Construction. Any rule of construction to the effect that ambiguities are to be resolved against the drafting party shall not be applied in interpreting this Settlement Agreement.
- (26) Non-Waiver. The failure to enforce any provision of this Settlement Agreement shall not be construed as a waiver of any such provision, nor prevent such Party thereafter from enforcing such provision or any other provision of this Settlement Agreement. The rights and remedies granted all Parties herein are cumulative and the election of one right or remedy by a Party shall not constitute a waiver of such Party's right to assert all other legal remedies available under this Settlement Agreement or otherwise provided by law.
- (27) Intent to be Bound. The Parties represent that: They have participated fully in the review and drafting of this Settlement Agreement; understand and accept all terms; enter into this Settlement Agreement freely and voluntarily; have had an opportunity to consult with legal counsel; are fully informed of the terms and effect of this Settlement Agreement; have agreed to this Settlement Agreement after independent investigation and agree it was not arrived at through fraud, duress, or undue influence; and knowingly and voluntarily intend to be legally bound by this Settlement Agreement.
- (28) Venue. The Superior Court of California, located in the County of Sacramento, shall hear any dispute between the Parties arising from this Settlement Agreement.
- (29) Counterparts and Electronic Signatures. This Settlement Agreement may be executed in counterparts. Electronic, facsimile or photocopied signatures shall be considered as valid signatures.

- (30) Release. In consideration of full payment of the civil penalty, and all other undertakings above, CARB hereby releases Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility and its principals, officers, receivers, trustees, successors and assignees, subsidiary and parent corporations, from any claims CARB may have based on the circumstances described in Paragraph 6 (Allegations) above.
- (31) Authority. The undersigned represents that he or she has full authority to enter into this Settlement Agreement.

### **PENALTY BASIS**

- (32) Per Unit Penalty. The per unit penalty in this case is a maximum of twelve thousand one hundred eighty dollars (\$12,180.00 USD) per day under Health and Safety Code section 38580 for violations of the LMR (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 17, § 95460 et seq.) The penalty of thirty-seven thousand three hundred twenty-six and 0/100 dollars (\$37,326.00) resulted from 234 hours of non-compliance occurring over 37 calendar days in 2021, and 276 hours of non-compliance over 96 calendar days in 2022, which is approximately two hundred eighty and 65/100 dollars (\$280.65) per day.
- (33) Emissions. The provisions cited in Paragraph 6 (Allegations) above do not prohibit emissions above a specified level. Without more information, it is not practicable to quantify the excess emissions.
- (34) Aggravating and Mitigating Factors. The penalties in this matter were determined in consideration of all relevant circumstances, including statutory factors as described in CARB's Enforcement Policy. CARB considered whether the violator came into compliance quickly and cooperated with the investigation; the extent of harm to public health, safety and welfare; nature and persistence of the violation, including the magnitude of the excess emissions; compliance history; preventative efforts taken; innovative nature and the magnitude of the effort required to comply, and the accuracy, reproducibility, and repeatability of the available test methods; efforts to attain, or provide for, compliance prior to violation; action taken to mitigate the violation; financial burden to the violator; and voluntary disclosure. The penalties are set at levels sufficient to deter violations, to remove any economic benefit or unfair advantage from noncompliance, to obtain swift compliance, and the potential costs, risks, and uncertainty associated with litigation. Penalties in future cases might be smaller or larger depending on the unique circumstances of the case.
- (35) Confidential Business Information. CARB may have based this penalty in part on confidential business information provided by Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility or confidential settlement communications.

(36) Effect of Settlement/Reservation of Rights. The following shall apply:

- (a) This Settlement Agreement resolves the civil claims of CARB for the violations alleged in this Settlement Agreement.
- (b) CARB reserves, and this Settlement Agreement is without prejudice to, all claims, rights, and remedies against Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility with respect to all matters not expressly resolved in this Settlement Agreement. Notwithstanding any other provision of the Settlement Agreement, CARB reserves all claims, rights, and remedies, whether in law or equity, against Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility with respect to:
  - (i) Noncompliance with or enforcement of any provision of this Settlement Agreement.
  - (ii) Facts that were not disclosed by Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility to CARB.
  - (iii) Violation of the California Health and Safety Code and its implementing regulations, or other State laws, regulations, or permit condition(s) not expressly resolved in this Settlement Agreement.
  - (iv) Any imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health, welfare, or the environment in California, whether related to the violations addressed in this Settlement Agreement or otherwise.
  - (v) Any criminal liability.
  - (vi) Any claim(s) of any officer or agency of the United States or California, other than CARB.
- (c) In any subsequent administrative or judicial proceeding initiated by CARB for injunctive relief, civil penalties, or other appropriate relief relating to enforcement of the Settlement Agreement, Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility shall not assert, and may not maintain, any defense or claim based upon the principles of waiver, res judicata, collateral estoppel, issue preclusion, claim preclusion, claim-splitting, or other defenses based upon any contention that the claims raised by CARB in the subsequent proceeding were or should have been brought in the instant case.
- (d) This Settlement Agreement does not limit or affect the rights of Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility or of CARB against any third parties not covered by this Settlement Agreement, nor does it limit the rights of third parties not covered by this Settlement Agreement against Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility, except as otherwise provided by law. This Settlement Agreement

shall not be construed to create rights in, or grant any cause of action to, any third party not covered by this Settlement Agreement.

- (e) This Settlement Agreement is not a permit, or a modification of any permit, under any federal, State, or local laws or regulations. Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility is responsible for achieving and maintaining compliance with all applicable federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and permits; Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility's compliance with this Settlement Agreement shall not be a defense to any action commenced pursuant to any such laws, regulations, or permits. CARB does not, by its execution of this Settlement Agreement, warrant or aver in any manner that Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility's compliance with any aspect of this Settlement Agreement will result in compliance with any provisions of federal, State, or local laws, regulations, or permits.

ACKNOWLEDGED AND ACCEPTED BY:

**California Air Resources Board**

Signature: /S/

Name: Heather L. Quiros

Title: Chief, Enforcement Division

Date: June 4, 2024

**Rock Creek Solid Waste Facility**

Signature: /S/

Name: Teresa Hitchcock

Title: Chief Executive Officer

Date: May 21, 2024