



Maryland
Department of
the Environment

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Maryland Department of Environment and Perdue AgriBusiness Agree to \$12 Million Settlement for Violations at Salisbury Soybean Facility

Failure to obtain permits and install controls resulted in increased emissions of ground-level ozone pollutant; Agreement includes penalty, requirements to reduce carbon emissions, environmental projects for the City of Salisbury

BALTIMORE (July 31, 2024) – Maryland Department of the Environment Secretary Serena McIlwain and Maryland Attorney General Anthony G. Brown today announced a \$12 million settlement with Perdue AgriBusiness LLC for air pollution violations at its Salisbury soybean facility. As a result of the settlement, Perdue will obtain all required permits, build cleaner processing equipment with the best pollution control technology, pay a civil penalty of \$8 million, electrify its heavy diesel equipment, and complete \$400,000 of environmental projects for the City of Salisbury.

The [consent decree](#), filed today in Wicomico County Circuit Court, describes a series of events in which the company withdrew an initial permit application but then failed to reapply before moving forward with an expansion of its operations by installing equipment without the required permits. A [complaint](#) filed in conjunction with the settlement states that the increased toxic air pollution emissions from the

unauthorized equipment contributed to state and regional ground-level ozone, a potential health concern.

“This case shows that everyone must follow the most basic requirements under our environmental laws and regulations, because overburdened communities living near industry often pay the price,” said Secretary McIlwain. “This is a fair settlement for Maryland that shows how companies can address these types of problems, come back into compliance with cleaner processing equipment and with proper permitting, and continue playing an important role in our state’s economy. We appreciate Perdue’s cooperation and are pleased the issue will be remedied and the community will benefit from new environmental enhancements.”

“Everyone must follow the rules which are in place to keep Marylanders safe. When Perdue failed to comply, it was the community who suffered the undue burden, so there must be meaningful penalties,” said Attorney General Anthony Brown. “I am glad that Perdue has accepted responsibility and will be investing in the surrounding neighborhoods moving forward.”

“Salisbury, Maryland is our home, where our family-owned company was founded over 100 years ago,” said Kevin McAdams, Perdue Farms CEO. “We are proud to have an annual economic impact of \$1.6 billion in the state of Maryland. While we have made some missteps along the way, we take full accountability, as reflected in today’s settlement agreement. We have taken substantial actions to ensure we have the proper controls in place to prevent this from happening again.”

The settlement terms include:

- Commitments to obtain the appropriate environmental permits retroactively and build cleaner processing equipment with the best pollution control technology
- An \$8 million civil penalty
- More than \$3.5 million in onsite pollution reduction actions, including electrifying heavy diesel equipment
- \$400,000 to the City of Salisbury to fund a terrascaping project and plant trees in areas with poor tree canopies

Perdue is based on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and owns and operates food, grain, and oilseed businesses. Its commercial poultry products and soybean processing facilities are regulated under operating permits to control emissions of volatile organic compounds that mix with other chemicals in heat and sunlight to

form ground-level ozone, which has long been recognized as harmful to human health.

In 2017, the company applied for a state air quality permit for the construction of equipment to upgrade and expand its soybean oil extraction operations. The state informed the company it was subject to additional review as required by federal and state air pollution regulations. Perdue AgriBusiness then withdrew the application, stating it would reconsider its project and resubmit an application.

However, the company installed unauthorized equipment and failed to reapply for the permit. Subsequent investigation revealed the existence of the equipment, which Perdue disclosed in 2022.

The consent decree is subject to final approval by the court.

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