GOOD NEIGHBORS-COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

When the Texas Legislature Session passed SB 1397, which relates to the continuation and functions of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, it stated on page 15 of the bill under Subchapter D, Sec.28A.151 BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

(a) The commission shall develop and make accessible on the commission's Internet website recommended best management practices for aggregate production operations that operate under the jurisdiction of the commission. The best management practices must include operational issues related to:

(1)dust control;

(2)water use; and

(3)water storage.

(b)The commission may coordinate with other agencies when developing the best management practices under this section.

(c)The best management practices developed under this section are not subject to enforcement by the commission

Below is a comprehensive list of Best Management Practices (BMPs), that go beyond air quality measures and could improve water conservation and management, as well as the mitigation of noise and light disturbances, all aimed at fostering better community relations.

General Site Management Practices

- Implement stockpile sprinklers at all times to minimize wind erosion.
- Sweep and wash roads on plant operation days for dust control.
- Limit operations to daytime for existing facilities in communities.
- Maintain a half-mile distance buffer from community land uses for new facilities.
- Install dust curtains at truck loading points and consider enclosed loading areas in residential zones.
- Protect fine aggregate stockpiles from wind erosion.
- Use dust suppressants, such as calcium chloride, in urban areas or areas with water scarcity.
- Apply water sprays to minimize dust on stockpiles, feed systems, and retaining walls.
- Ensure proper drainage and capture of water, with appropriate pretreatment before discharge.

- Maintain incident records at the plant.
- Facility staff should be made aware of BMPs.

Site Water Management

A reduction in water usage could be achieved by the following options:

- Monitor and audit water usage.
- Use water-reducing admixtures to minimize the amount of water used in batch concrete.
- Capture and reuse wash water.
- Restrict freshwater usage to truck exterior wash off, hot water production, and batch water for high-quality concrete.
- Install flow controls on freshwater sources, where feasible.
- Recycle water, including segmented water recovery and recycle ponds for wash, process, stormwater, and wastewater. Consider recycling wash sand back into the cement mix.
- Implement rainwater capture systems, such as water collection ponds and storage tanks, to harness significant volumes of water per year for plant processes and truck washing.
- Provide training to employees on minimizing water use and water conservation practices.
- Conduct chemical truck washing safely, using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Dispose of the resulting wash water, typically neutralized, using safe and environmentally sound practices.
- Implement sloped settling ponds for washout, where practical.
- Contain wastewater and surface runoff to prevent contamination and promptly clean up spills. For example, prevent wet concrete from entering watercourses using on-site measures like drop sheets.

“Good Neighbor” Practices

The subsequent sections focus on measures aimed at minimizing nuisance complaints and fostering a proactive relationship building between proposed mines and local communities.

Site Noise & Light Management

- Replace backup alarms with duck quack ("white noise") alarms instead of beepers.

- Utilize visual, flashing warning lights for non-critical process alarms to capture operator attention. Reserve audible "warning horns" for critical major alarms.
- Implement carefully designed plant lighting following Dark Sky lighting criteria as a best management practice (BMP).
    - Install LED fixtures on timers and solar-sensitive shut-offs for external lighting.
    - Shield external lighting to minimize horizontal light projection beyond the property.
    - Route truck traffic to minimize headlight projection towards off-property locations, where possible.

Fitting Mines into local community

In order to seamlessly integrate mines into the local community, a primary objective is to minimize the industrial appearance of the entire plant operation. During the design phase or retrofitting of the plant facilities, careful consideration can be given to incorporate elements that allow the facility to harmonize with its surroundings. Several Best Management Practices (BMPs) can be employed for this purpose, including:

- Employing design elements that blend with the surrounding properties to reduce the industrial aesthetic of the plant operation.
- Constructing large water storage tanks in rural areas to resemble grain silos.
- Utilizing locally sourced materials, such as limestone rock, to match the typical architectural style of the area for on-site buildings like offices, control rooms, maintenance facilities, and bathhouses.
- Enveloping overhead aggregate bins and other process equipment with barn steel structures.
- Planting trees along the perimeter and considering the addition of perimeter strips of typical agricultural field crops, such as coastal hay grass or corn.
- In urban areas, designing the facilities to resemble large mansion homes, sports arenas, gymnasiums, or other creative options that seamlessly blend with the surrounding environment.
- Avoid facility entrances and truck routes on residential streets.

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Encourage Proactive Relationship Building

In addition to these considerations, it is important for miners to address other site management factors. Typically, the permitting process for miners coincides with the standard planning, design, construction, and startup activities. However, the interaction with neighboring landowners and other stakeholders ("neighbors") is often overlooked until after site construction has begun, leading to a less than satisfactory introduction.

To establish positive and lasting relationships with neighbors, miners can proactively seek out and engage with neighboring parties prior to commencing site work. This proactive approach can be initiated through the formation of an "Advisory Council," where miners and neighbors regularly convene to provide updates on plans, operating procedures, employed BMPs, and to address any queries or concerns raised by the neighbors. Conducting pre-construction meetings with neighboring landowners is one of the BMPs that should pave the way for the establishment of ongoing Advisory Council meetings, fostering open communication and collaborative decision-making processes.