Olin Corp. to pay La. $500,000

By BOB ANDERSON
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Olin Chemical Corp. agreed on Thursday to pay the state $500,000 in connection with 250 environmental violations alleged by the Department of Environmental Quality.

Earlier this month, DEQ proposed a $2.98 million penalty for the violations. Maximum penalties for all of the violations could have totaled $70 million, according to DEQ Secretary Pat Norton.

The settlement involves both Olin's Shreveport and Lake Charles sites, but most violations occurred at the Lake Charles plant, which is responsible for $400,000 of the settlement, the settlement documents allege.

In agreeing to the settlement, Olin maintained its innocence.

Prior to issuing the proposed penalty, DEQ and Olin had attempted for seven months to negotiate a settlement, according to Norton, who said the case covers "years of problems."

The company allowed groundwater contamination at both sites, DEQ alleged in the proposed penalty, which also cited the Lake Charles plant for violations of its surface water discharge permit and unpermitted air discharges, including a 1984 release of phosgene.

DEQ said Olin should have known the phosgene would leave its property, but did not notify DEQ of the incident as is required by state regulations.

Most of the citations involved the company's wastewater discharges, including incidents that went back to 1982.

Olin did not notify DEQ of contaminants escaping into the groundwater beneath the site and allowed "leaking or discharge . . . from an old landfill and storage area into the surface and shallow groundwater," at the Lake Charles plant, DEQ said.

Under the settlement Olin agrees to take a number of corrective actions at its Lake Charles site, including providing the state with plans to accomplish the following:

- Deal with groundwater problems.
- Close two ponds.
- Deal with liquid draining from its old landfill and storage areas.
- Treat surface runoff.
- Add monitoring wells.
- Sample soil and water.

The agreement sets deadlines for accomplishing those and other tasks, and calls for a penalty of $1,000-a-day for failure to meet the deadlines.

In Shreveport, the company must evaluate the impact of its surface impoundments on two groundwater aquifers and present a plan for dealing with groundwater contamination on the site.