



United States Steel Corporation – Midwest Plant
U. S. Highway 12
Portage, IN 46368

VIA ELECTRONIC SUBMITTAL

October 11, 2021

Mr. Jason House
Office of Water Quality
Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM)
100 North Senate Avenue – Post Office Box 6015
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Subject: United States Steel Corporation – Midwest Plant (Midwest)
NPDES Permit IN0000337
Outfall 004 Sheen

Dear Mr. House:

This letter is the written follow up for the sheen observed at Outfall 004 on Thursday October 7, 2021 at Midwest. This letter also satisfies Part IX.28 of the Midwest Consent Decree United States v. United States Steel Corporation, 2:18-CV-127 JD (Consent Decree).

Midwest personnel cooperated with IDEM, United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the Indiana Dunes National Park Service (Park Service) for a site visit. During the site visit all confirmed the sheen was contained by the permanent boom and appropriate actions were being taken to mitigate the sheen. There was no harm to human health, aquatic life, or wildlife.

Description of Event:

On Thursday October 7, 2021 the Midwest facility observed a light, heavily degraded oil sheen at Outfall 004 in Burns Waterway. At approximately 8:07 am CDT, the Midwest Final Treatment Operator notified Midwest Management of the sheen. The Environmental Engineer observed the sheen at approximately 8:34 am CDT and reported the sheen to IDEM at approximately 8:38 am CDT. In addition to IDEM, the following were also notified of the incident: National Response Center (NRC), USEPA, Indiana Dunes National Park, Port of Indiana, Porter County Sheriff's Office, Michigan City Water, East Chicago Water, Hammond Works Water, Indiana American Water, City of Chicago Water, City of Portage, Ogden Dunes,



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and Senator Tallian.

Once Midwest discovered the sheen the rolling mills were shut down. It was observed that a small amount of sheen was accumulating along the north side of the permanent boom at Outfall 004. Midwest contacted a contractor to bring in a vacuum truck to recover the sheen in the permanent boom as well as small amounts that accumulated just outside the boom along the north shoreline. The sheen was completely contained at approximately 9:00 am CDT and the Outfall 004 was clear of any sheen at approximately 3:00 pm CDT. Operations at Midwest remained down until the source of the sheen was identified and addressed.

An investigation was conducted, and it was determined there were no abnormal issues within the steel finishing operations. At this time, it is thought that the sheen may have been due to reduced removal efficiency at the Pretreatment Plant due to low water flows. The low water flow was a result of operations outages at the steel finishing plant in combination with dewatering activities occurring at the Oily Waste Pad. The low water flow inhibited the ability to skim oil at the Pretreatment Plant equalization tank which then increased the oil loading at the oil interceptor and dissolved air flotation separators. Midwest is actively investigating opportunities to improve the capabilities of the Pretreatment Plant in accordance with the IDEM Agreed Order as well as the dewatering procedures at the Oily Waste Pad to further reduce oil and solids loading to the Pretreatment Plant.

Corrective actions to reduce reoccurrence include the following:

- Continue third-party evaluation of the Pretreatment Plant pursuant to the IDEM Agreed Order
- Develop procedure for skimming the Pretreatment Plant equalization tank during low flow conditions
- Review and revise procedure for dewatering from Oily Waste Pad

If you have any questions about this matter, please call me at (219) 763-5022 or email me at tlsullivan@uss.com.

Sincerely,

Tim Sullivan
Environmental Manager
United States Steel Corporation
Midwest Plant