



Indiana Department of Environmental Management

We Protect Hoosiers and Our Environment.

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(800) 451-6027 • (317) 232-8603 • www.idem.IN.gov

Eric J. Holcomb
Governor

Brian Rockensuess
Commissioner

March 31, 2022

Via Certified Mail:

Mr. Sam Cooper, Chief Operations Officer
PolyJohn
2500 Gaspar Avenue
Whiting, Indiana 46394

Dear Mr. Cooper:

Re: Inspection Summary/ Noncompliance Letter
PolyJohn
Whiting, Lake County

An inspection of the above-referenced facility or location was conducted by a representative of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Northwest Regional Office, pursuant to IC 13-18-3-9. A summary of the inspection is provided below:

Date(s) of Inspection: March 25, 2022
Type of Inspection: Complaint Investigation
Inspection Results: Violations were observed.

The following concerns were noted:

1. The Complaint category was rated as unsatisfactory. 327 IAC 2-1-6(a)(1) requires all waters to meet the minimum conditions of being free from substances, materials, floating debris, oil, or scum attributable to municipal, industrial, agricultural, and other land use practices, or other discharges: 1. That will settle to form putrescent or otherwise objectionable deposits; 2. That are in amounts sufficient to be unsightly or deleterious; 3. That produce color, visible oil sheen, odor, or other conditions in such degree as to create nuisance.

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This information is being forwarded to the OWQ Enforcement Section for consideration in conjunction with your Agreed Order, Case No. 2020-27467-W. Please direct any response to this letter and any questions to Nicholas Ream at 219-730-1691 or by email to nream@idem.IN.gov. A copy of the NPDES Industrial Facility Inspection Report is enclosed for your records.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Massoels". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Rick" and last name "Massoels" clearly distinguishable.

Rick Massoels, Deputy Director
Northwest Regional Office

Enclosure

Cc: Amari Farren, Water Enforcement



NPDES Industrial Facility Inspection Report

INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

NPDES Permit Number: No Permit	Facility Type: Industrial	Facility Classification: Minor	TEMPO AI ID NA
Date(s) of Inspection: March 25, 2022			
Type of Inspection: Complaint Investigation			
Name and Location of Facility Inspected: PolyJohn 2500 Gaspar Whiting IN 46394		County: Lake	Receiving Waters/POTW: NA
			Permit Expiration Date: No Permit
			Design Flow: NA
On Site Representative(s):			
First Name	Last Name	Title	Email
Sam	Cooper	Chief Operations Officer	sam.cooper@polyjohn.com
Josh	Scheeringa	Yard Manager	josh.scheeringa@polyjohn.com
Phone: 800-292-1305			
Was a verbal summary of the inspection given to the on-site rep? Yes			
Certified Operator: NA	Number:	Class:	Effective Date:
	Expiration Date:	Email:	
Cyber Security Contact			
Name: Email:			
Responsible Official: Mr. Sam Cooper, Chief Operations Officer 2500 Gaspar Avenue Whiting, Indiana 46394		Permittee: PolyJohn	
		Email: sam.cooper@polyjohn.com	
		Phone: 800-292-1305	Contacted?
		Fax:	Yes
INSPECTION FINDINGS			
<input type="radio"/> Conditions evaluated were found to be satisfactory at the time of the inspection. (5)			
<input type="radio"/> Violations were discovered but corrected during the inspection. (4)			
<input type="radio"/> Potential problems were discovered or observed. (3)			
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Violations were discovered and require a submittal from you and/or a follow-up inspection by IDEM. (2)			
<input type="radio"/> Violations were discovered and may subject you to an appropriate enforcement response. (1)			
AREAS EVALUATED DURING INSPECTION			
(S = Satisfactory, M = Marginal, U = Unsatisfactory, N = Not Evaluated)			
N	Receiving Waters	N	Facility/Site
N	Effluent/Discharge	N	Operation
N	Permit	N	Maintenance
		N	Sludge
N		N	Self-Monitoring
		N	Flow Measurement
		N	Laboratory
		N	Records/Reports
		U	Other: Complaint
DETAILED AREA EVALUATIONS			
A complaint was received by IDEM personnel on March 24, 2022. One of the complaints alleged plastic pellets were visible at a PolyJohn discharge point. A photograph was attached to the email and it appeared to show grey material next to a pipe discharge to a waterway. This complaint was entered into RM and issued RM Number 100561.			
Upon arriving at George Lake on March 25, 2022, we viewed the southern storm water discharge point for PolyJohn. Fine grey powder-like plastics were observed in the ditch at the discharge point and were also visible along the ditch banks, though noticeably less than the volume shown in the photograph supplied by the complainant.			
We entered the PolyJohn property and met with Mr. Sam Cooper, the Chief of Operations Officer. We made Mr. Cooper aware of the complaint. Mr. Cooper stated they were aware of the discharge and were actively investigating the source of the plastic. Mr. Josh Scheeringa, PolyJohn Yard Manager, joined the conversation and added clean up was ongoing with the plastic fines being vacuumed from the receiving stream on March 24, 2022, explaining the reduction of plastics since the complainants photograph was taken. Mr. Scheeringa also intended to continue the vacuum			

operations on March 25, 2022.

The material was identified as roto-powder and is composed of ground plastic pellets that are used in molding plastic materials on-site. Based on the amount of material found in the ditch, the PolyJohn investigation is focusing on the possibility of roto-powder clinging to bins that are stored outside and a ruptured bin or bins of roto-powder being stored outside.

We investigated the facility and found two storm drains in which the 20 gauge mesh baskets contained roto-powder. Please refer to the attached photo in the complaint investigation report. These drains both discharge to the southern storm water system. The north storm water system was also investigated. There were no visual signs of the roto-powder at the north storm water collection system discharge. PolyJohn personnel also sealed the overflows on the mesh baskets to prevent high water levels flowing past the baskets.

Mr. Cooper stated the bins containing roto-powder would be moved to an indoor area to prevent exposure to wet weather. We requested a photograph from Mr. Scheeringa showing the storm water ditch after the completion of the vacuuming. We received the photograph on March 25, 2022 and it appeared to show no grey material in the water or on the ditch banks.

The facility is currently under Agreed Order 2020-27476-W for discharges through the storm water system entering a fringe wetland and George Lake.

Effluent Limits Compliance:

No 1. Were DMRs reviewed as part of the inspection?

Comments:

Other: Complaint

Comments:

The Complaint category was rated as unsatisfactory. 327 IAC 2-1-6(a)(1) requires all waters to meet the minimum conditions of being free from substances, materials, floating debris, oil, or scum attributable to municipal, industrial, agricultural, and other land use practices, or other discharges: 1. That will settle to form putrescent or otherwise objectionable deposits; 2. That are in amounts sufficient to be unsightly or deleterious; 3. That produce color, visible oil sheen, odor, or other conditions in such degree as to create nuisance.

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This matter is already being addressed as part of Agreed Order 2020-27467-W and will be referred to the IDEM Office of Water Quality Enforcement Section for their consideration.

IDEM REPRESENTATIVE

Inspector Name:	Email:	Phone Number:
Nicholas Ream	nream@idem.IN.gov	219-730-1691
Other staff participating in the inspection:		
Name(s)	Phone Number(s)	
Ramelito Biscocho	219-464-0233	
Kelly Paulson	219-464-0233	

IDEM MANAGER REVIEW

IDEM Manager:	Date:
Rick Massoels	3/29/2022

Inspection Photographs



Facility:	
PolyJohn	
Photographer:	
Nicholas Ream	
Date: 03/25/2022	Time: 12:55 PM
Others Present:	
Location/Description:	
West and down view of the south discharge of storm water from PolyJohn. This water is combined with other storm water from the area prior to discharge. Fine grey plastic powder was observed in the waterway and on the bank.	
Others Present: Kelly Paulson and Ramelito Biscocho	



Facility:	
PolyJohn	
Photographer:	
Nicholas Ream	
Date: 03/25/2022	Time: 12:55 PM
Others Present:	
Location/Description:	
West and down view of the south discharge of storm water from PolyJohn. This water is combined with other storm water from the area prior to discharge. Fine grey plastic powder was observed in the waterway and on the bank.	
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Others Present: Kelly Paulson and Ramelito Biscocho	



Facility: PolyJohn	
Photographer: Nicholas Ream	
Date: 03/25/2022	Time: 1:30 PM
Others Present:	
Location/Description: One of two storm water drains opened that had roto-powder visible in the mesh strainer.	
Others Present: Sam Cooper, Josh Scheeringa, Kelly Paulson and Ramelito Biscocho	



Facility: PolyJohn	
Photographer: Nicholas Ream	
Date: 03/25/2022	Time: 1:35 PM
Others Present:	
Location/Description: Northeast view of the north storm water discharge. No evidence of roto-powder was observed at the discharge point.	
Others Present: Sam Cooper, Josh Scheeringa, Kelly Paulson and Ramelito Biscocho	