

Sherry and Philip Hastings

August 20, 2022

RE: Comments on Water Gremlin's Major Air Permit
Submitted by Sherry and Philip Hastings, Residents of White Bear Township

As residents of the White Bear Township, we are looking to the MPCA to reinforce the highest level of oversight with rigorous controls, monitoring and enforcement of compliance relative to all the provisions set forth in the Major Air Permit for Water Gremlin.

We support the comments made from the Neighborhood Concerned Citizens Group (NCCG).

Water Gremlin's operations have been the subject of scrutiny from state regulators, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency ("MPCA"), the Minnesota Department of Health ("MDH"), the Department of Labor and Industry ("DOLI"), and Ramsey County.

A Stipulation Agreement was signed on March 1, 2019 between Water Gremlin and the MPCA as a result of almost two decades of violations of the permit issued by MPCA.

Water Gremlin has a long history of violations of their permit issued by the MPCA. Charts on pages 7, 10 and 11 of the Stipulation Agreement provide a quick overview of the violations.

In January 2019, our community was made aware that Water Gremlin had violated their permit with respect to TCE emissions for a period of more than 17-years. These occurred every single year, with the most egregious violations in 2018.

- Allowed emissions from 2002 to 2018 = 170 tons
- Actual emissions from 2002 to 2018 = 910 tons

Of particular note, Water Gremlin was subject to a 'duty of candor' violation by the MPCA when it was discovered that Water Gremlin did not curtail their production as they said they would and instead increased production and TCE emissions (68.03 tons between July and December) during the fall of 2018, just prior to 'voluntarily' shutting down operations until the March 1, 2019 Stipulation Agreement was signed. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/aq-ei6-01b.pdf>, Page 11, section 6.

The emissions data from the fall of 2018, as well as from 2002-2018 is an estimate based on Water Gremlin's reconstruction of activities. They did not retain documentation of TCE purchases, inventory or use.

Furthermore, two Administrative Orders were issued dated August 22, 2019 and January 17, 2020 citing further violations from Water Gremlin. Hazardous waste violations were cited as well, resulting in a \$325,000 civil penalty.

In addition, MDH and DOLI took court action October 2019 to shut down Water Gremlin's lead

casting operations due to 12 cases of elevated blood lead levels (EBLs) in children of Water Gremlin employees. MDH identified an additional 12 children of Water Gremlin workers with EBLs, bringing the total to 24 children.

With Water Gremlin violating the trust of the citizens of the White Bear Area for years and demonstrating their lack of due care for the health and wellbeing of the community and the environment, we support the proposed permit and in particular the 5 year expiration of the permit, ongoing ambient air monitoring for the life of the permit, adherence to emission limits for t-DCE and the emissions should be less than human health values established by the Department of Health, continued monitoring of ambient air requirements at the perimeter of the property, continuation of the vapor remediation system, and continuous emissions monitoring in the battery terminal post coating stack.

We are advocating for ongoing accountability, as Water Gremlin has demonstrated they can't be trusted.

A special thank you to our state regulators the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency ("MPCA"), the Minnesota Department of Health ("MDH"), the Department of Labor and Industry ("DOLI"), and Ramsey County for all your efforts to date, commitment of time, resources and holding Water Gremlin accountable for their egregious violations to the citizens of the White Bear Area, their employees, students attending schools in the area and to all those who work in the White Bear Area. We also want to thank our legislators, environmental nonprofits, communities across Minnesota and many others who have volunteered their time and resources in regards to this matter. We will never forget.