

**FILED**

**Oct 10, 2024**

**1:47 pm**

**U.S. EPA REGION 4  
HEARING CLERK**

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region 4

In the Matter of:

**Duke Energy Florida, LLC,**

Respondent.

Docket No. **EPCRA-04-2024-2011(b)**

**CONSENT AGREEMENT**

**I. NATURE OF ACTION**

1. This is an administrative penalty assessment proceeding brought under Section 325 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, 42 U.S.C. § 11045 (EPCRA), and Sections 22.13(b) and 22.18 of the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits (Consolidated Rules), as codified at Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.), Part 22.
2. This Consent Agreement and the attached Final Order shall collectively be referred to as the CAFO.
3. Having found that settlement is consistent with the provisions and objectives of EPCRA and applicable regulations, the Parties have agreed to settle this action pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.18 and consent to the entry of this CAFO without Respondent's admission of violation or adjudication of any issues of law or fact herein.

**II. PARTIES**

4. Complainant is the Director of the Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division, United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4, who has been delegated the authority on behalf of the Administrator of the EPA to enter into this CAFO pursuant to 40 C.F.R. Part 22 and Section 325 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045.

5. Respondent is **Duke Energy Florida, LLC** (Respondent), a limited liability company doing business in the State of Florida. This proceeding pertains to Respondent's facility located at 15760 West Power Line Street, Crystal River, Florida 34428 (Facility).

### III. GOVERNING LAW

6. Section 304(a) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. §11004(a) and the regulations found at 40 C.F.R. Part 355, Subpart C, require the owner or operator of a facility at which a hazardous chemical is produced, used or stored, to immediately provide notice to the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) and Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) as described in Section 304(b) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11004(b), when there has been a release of an EPCRA extremely hazardous substance in an amount equal to or greater than the reportable quantity (RQ) from a facility. Section 304(a) does not apply to any release which results in exposure to persons solely within the site or sites on which a facility is located.
7. Sulfur Dioxide is an "extremely hazardous substance" as that term is defined by Section 329(3) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(3), with an RQ of 500 pounds, as specified in 40 C.F.R. § 355 Appendices A and B.
8. "Facility" means all buildings, equipment, structures, and other stationary items which are located on a single site or on contiguous or adjacent sites and which are owned or operated by the same person (or by any person which controls, is controlled by, or under common control with, such person). Facility includes manmade structures, as well as all-natural structures in which chemicals are purposefully placed or removed through human means such that it functions as a containment structure for human use. For purposes of section 304 of EPCRA, the term includes motor vehicles, rolling stock, and aircraft. Section 329(4) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(4); 40 C.F.R. § 355.61.
9. "Person" means any individual, trust, firm, joint stock company, corporation (including a government corporation), partnership, association, State, municipality, commission, political subdivision of a State, or interstate body. Section 329(7) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(7); 40 C.F.R. § 355.61.
10. "Release" means any spilling, leaking, pumping, pouring, emitting, emptying, discharging, injecting, escaping, leaching, dumping, or disposing into the environment (including the abandonment or discarding of barrels, containers, and other closed receptacles) of any hazardous chemical, extremely hazardous chemical, or toxic chemical. Section 329(8) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11049(8); 40 C.F.R. § 355.61.
11. Pursuant to Section 325(b) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(b), and 40 C.F.R. Part 19, the EPA may assess a civil penalty for each violation of Section 304(a) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. §11004(a). Civil penalties under Section 325(b) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(b), may be assessed by administrative order.

#### **IV. FINDINGS OF FACTS**

12. On August 21, 2023, a release of Sulfur Dioxide above the RQ under EPCRA occurred at the Facility.
13. The August 21, 2023, release of Sulfur Dioxide resulted in the potential for exposure to persons beyond the site or sites on which the Facility is located.
14. Respondent failed to immediately notify the SERC and LEPC, as soon as Respondent had knowledge of the release of Sulfur Dioxide in an amount equal to or greater than its RQ at Respondent's Facility.

#### **V. ALLEGED VIOLATIONS**

15. Respondent is a "person" and was the owner or operator of the Facility which is a "facility", as those terms are defined under EPCRA, during the relevant period described herein.
16. Respondent violated the notification requirements of Section 304(a) of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11004(a), and the applicable regulation, 40 C.F.R. Part 355, Subpart C, by failing to immediately notify the SERC and LEPC as soon as Respondent had knowledge of the August 21, 2023, release of Sulfur Dioxide in an amount equal to or greater than its RQ at Respondent's Facility and is therefore subject to the assessment of penalties under Section 325 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045.

#### **VI. STIPULATIONS**

17. The issuance of this CAFO simultaneously commences and concludes this proceeding. 40 C.F.R. § 22.13(b).
18. For the purpose of this proceeding, as required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2), Respondent:
  - a. admits that EPA has jurisdiction over the subject matter alleged in this CAFO;
  - b. neither admits nor denies the factual allegations set forth in Section IV (Findings of Facts) of this CAFO;
  - c. consents to the assessment of a civil penalty as stated below;
  - d. consents to the conditions specified in this CAFO;
  - e. waives any right to contest the allegations set forth in Section V (Alleged Violations) of this CAFO; and
  - f. waives its rights to appeal the Final Order accompanying this CAFO.

19. For the purpose of this proceeding, Respondent:

- a. agrees that this CAFO states a claim upon which relief may be granted against Respondent;
- b. acknowledges that this CAFO constitutes an enforcement action for purposes of considering Respondent's compliance history in any subsequent enforcement actions;
- c. waives any rights it may possess at law or in equity to challenge the authority of EPA to bring a civil action in a United States District Court to compel compliance with the CAFO, and to seek an additional penalty for such noncompliance, and agrees that federal law shall govern in any such civil action;
- d. by executing this CAFO, certifies to the best of its knowledge that Respondent is currently in compliance with all relevant requirements of EPCRA and its implementing regulations, and that all violations alleged herein, which are neither admitted nor denied, have been corrected;
- e. waives any right it may have pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.8 to be present during any discussions with, or to be served with and reply to, any memorandum or communication addressed to EPA officials where the purpose of such discussion, memorandum, or communication is to persuade such official to accept and issue this CAFO; and
- f. agrees to comply with the terms of this CAFO.

20. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.5, the individuals named in the certificate of service are authorized to receive service related to this proceeding and the parties agree to receive service by electronic means.

## VII. TERMS OF PAYMENT

21. Respondent agrees to pay a civil penalty in the amount of **\$16,350.00** ("Assessed Penalty") within thirty (30) calendar days after the Effective Date of this CAFO.
22. Respondent shall pay the Assessed Penalty and any interest, fees, and other charges due using any method, or combination of appropriate methods, as provided on the EPA website: <https://www.epa.gov/financial/makepayment>. For additional instructions see: <https://www.epa.gov/financial/additional-instructions-making-payments-epa>.
23. When making a payment, Respondent shall:
  - a. Identify every payment with Respondent's name and the docket number of this Agreement, **EPCRA-04-2024-2011(b)**, and
  - b. Concurrently with any payment or within 24 hours of any payment, serve proof of such payment to the following person(s):

Regional Hearing Clerk  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4  
r4\_regional\_hearing\_clerk@epa.gov

Tony Spann  
Air Enforcement Branch  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4  
spann.tony@epa.gov

and

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Cincinnati Finance Center  
Via electronic mail to:  
CINWD\_AcctsReceivable@epa.gov

“Proof of payment” means, as applicable, a copy of the check, confirmation of credit card or debit card payment, or confirmation of wire or automated clearinghouse transfer, and any other information required to demonstrate that payment has been made according to EPA requirements, in the amount due, and identified with the appropriate docket number and Respondent’s name.

24. Interest, Charges, and Penalties on Late Payments. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717, 31 C.F.R. § 901.9, and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11, if Respondent fails to timely pay any portion of the Assessed Penalty per this Agreement, the entire unpaid balance of the Assessed Penalty and all accrued interest shall become immediately due and owing, and EPA is authorized to recover the following amounts.

- a. Interest. Interest begins to accrue from the Effective Date. If the Assessed Penalty is paid in full within thirty (30) calendar days, interest accrued is waived. If the Assessed Penalty is not paid in full within thirty (30) calendar days, interest will continue to accrue until any unpaid portion of the Assessed Penalty as well as any interest, penalties, and other charges are paid in full. To protect the interests of the United States the rate of interest is set at the IRS standard underpayment rate, any lower rate would fail to provide Respondent adequate incentive for timely payment.
- b. Handling Charges. Respondent will be assessed monthly a charge to cover EPA’s costs of processing and handling overdue debts. If Respondent fails to pay the Assessed Penalty in accordance with this Agreement, EPA will assess a charge to cover the costs of handling any unpaid amounts for the first thirty (30) calendar day period after the Effective Date. Additional handling charges will be assessed every thirty (30) calendar days, or any portion thereof, until the unpaid portion of the Assessed Penalty as well as any accrued interest, penalties, and other charges are paid in full.
- c. Late Payment Penalty. A late payment penalty of six percent (6%) per annum, will be assessed monthly on all debts, including any unpaid portion of the Assessed Penalty,

interest, penalties, and other charges, that remain delinquent more than ninety (90) calendar days.

25. Late Penalty Actions. In addition to the amounts described in the prior Paragraph, if Respondent fails to timely pay any portion of the Assessed Penalty, interest, or other charges and penalties per this Agreement, EPA may take additional actions. Such actions EPA may take include, but are not limited to, the following.
- a. Refer the debt to a credit reporting agency or a collection agency, per 40 C.F.R. §§ 13.13 and 13.14.
  - b. Collect the debt by administrative offset (i.e., the withholding of money payable by the United States government to, or held by the United States government for, a person to satisfy the debt the person owes the United States government), which includes, but is not limited to, referral to the Internal Revenue Service for offset against income tax refunds, per 40 C.F.R. Part 13, Subparts C and H.
  - c. Suspend or revoke Respondent's licenses or other privileges, or suspend or disqualify Respondent from doing business with EPA or engaging in programs EPA sponsors or funds, per 40 C.F.R. § 13.17.
  - d. Request that the Attorney General bring a civil action in the appropriate district court to recover the amount assessed, in addition to the amounts described above, pursuant to Section 325 of EPCRA, 42 U.S.C. § 11045(f)(1).
26. Allocation of Payments. Pursuant to 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(f) and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(d), a partial payment of debt will be applied first to outstanding handling charges, second to late penalty charges, third to accrued interest, and last to the principal that is the outstanding Assessed Penalty amount.
27. Tax Treatment of Penalties. Penalties, interest, and other charges paid pursuant to this Agreement shall not be deductible for purposes of federal taxes.

#### VIII. EFFECT OF CAFO

28. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c), Respondent's full compliance with this CAFO shall only resolve Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations and facts specifically alleged above.
29. Full payment of the civil penalty, as provided in Section VII (Terms of Payment) shall satisfy the requirements of this CAFO; but, shall not in any case affect the right of EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law. 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c).
30. Nothing in this CAFO shall relieve Respondent of the duty to comply with all applicable provisions of EPCRA and other federal, state, or local laws or statutes, nor shall it restrict EPA's authority to seek compliance with any applicable laws or regulations, nor shall it be construed

to be a ruling on, or determination of, any issue related to any federal, state, or local permit, except as expressly provided herein.

31. Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the power of EPA to undertake any action against Respondent or any person in response to conditions that may present an imminent and substantial endangerment as provided under EPCRA.
32. The terms, conditions, and compliance requirements of this CAFO may not be modified or amended except upon the written agreement of both Parties, and approval of the Regional Judicial Officer.
33. The provisions of this CAFO shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent and its successors and assigns. Respondent shall direct its officers, directors, employees, agents, trustees, and authorized representatives to comply with the provisions of this CAFO.
34. Any change in the legal status of the Respondent, or change in ownership, partnership, corporate or legal status relating to the Facility, will not in any way alter Respondent's obligations and responsibilities under this CAFO.
35. By signing this Consent Agreement, Respondent acknowledges that this CAFO will be available to the public and agrees that this CAFO does not contain any confidential business information or personally identifiable information.
36. By signing this Consent Agreement, the Complainant and the undersigned representative of Respondent each certify that he or she is fully authorized to execute and enter into the terms and conditions of this CAFO and has the legal capacity to bind the party he or she represents to this CAFO.
37. By signing this Consent Agreement, both Parties agree that each party's obligations under this CAFO constitute sufficient consideration for the other party's obligations.
38. By signing this Consent Agreement, Respondent certifies that the information it has supplied concerning this matter was at the time of submission, and continues to be, true, accurate, and complete for each such submission, response, and statement. Respondent acknowledges that there are significant penalties for submitting false or misleading information, including the possibility of fines and imprisonment for knowing submission of such information, under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.
39. EPA also reserves the right to revoke this CAFO and settlement penalty if and to the extent that EPA finds, after signing this CAFO, that any information provided by Respondent was materially false or inaccurate at the time such information was provided to EPA. If such false or inaccurate material was provided, EPA reserves the right to assess and collect any and all civil penalties for any violation described herein. EPA shall give Respondent notice of its intent to revoke, which shall not be effective until received by Respondent in writing.
40. Unless specifically stated otherwise in this CAFO, each party shall bear its own attorney's fees, costs, and disbursements incurred in this proceeding.

41. It is the intent of the parties that the provisions of this CAFO are severable. If any provision or authority of this CAFO or the application of this CAFO to any party or circumstances is held by any judicial or administrative authority to be invalid or unenforceable, the application of such provisions to other parties or circumstances and the remainder of the CAFO shall remain in force and shall not be affected thereby.

**IX. EFFECTIVE DATE**

42. This CAFO shall become effective after execution of the Final Order by the Regional Judicial Officer, on the date of filing with the Hearing Clerk.

**Remainder of Page Intentionally Left Blank**

**Complainant and Respondent will Each Sign on Separate Pages**



The foregoing Consent Agreement in the matter of **Duke Energy Florida, LLC**, Docket No. **EPCRA-04-2024-2011(b)**, is Hereby Stipulated, Agreed, and Approved for Entry.

FOR RESPONDENT:

Signature Zachary Hall Date 9/17/24

Printed Name: Zachary Hall

Title: Vice President, EHS

Address: 525 South Tryon Street, Charlotte, NC 28202

The foregoing Consent Agreement in the matter of **Duke Energy Florida, LLC**, Docket No. **EPCRA-04-2024-2011(b)**, is Hereby Stipulated, Agreed, and Approved for Entry.

FOR COMPLAINANT:

\_\_\_\_\_  
for Keriema S. Newman  
Director  
Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 4

In the Matter of:

**Duke Energy Florida, LLC,**

Respondent.

Docket No. **EPCRA-04-2024-2011(b)**

FINAL ORDER

The Regional Judicial Officer is authorized to ratify this Consent Agreement which memorializes a settlement between Complainant and Respondent. 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.4(b) and 22.18(b)(3). The foregoing Consent Agreement is, therefore, hereby approved, ratified and incorporated by reference into this Final Order in accordance with the *Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits*, 40 C.F.R. Part 22.

The Respondent is hereby ORDERED to comply with all of the terms of the foregoing Consent Agreement effective immediately upon filing of this Consent Agreement and Final Order with the Regional Hearing Clerk. This Final Order disposes of this matter pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.18 and 22.31.

**BEING AGREED, IT IS SO ORDERED.**

---

Regional Judicial Officer

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order, in the matter of **Duke Energy Florida, LLC**, Docket No. **EPCRA-04-2024-2011(b)**, were filed and copies of the same were emailed to the parties as indicated below.

**Via email to all parties at the following email addresses:**

To Respondent:        Zachary Hall, Vice President, Environmental Health & Safety  
Duke Energy Florida, LLC  
Zachary.Hall@duke-energy.com  
525 South Tryon Street  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202  
(980) 373-8166

Sarah Anna Santos, Associate General Counsel  
Duke Energy Florida, LLC  
Sarah.Santos@duke-energy.com  
525 South Tryon Street  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202  
(980) 373-6211

To EPA:                 Tony Spann, Case Development Officer  
spann.tony@epa.gov  
(404) 562-8971

Lucia Mendez, Attorney-Adviser  
mendez.lucia@epa.gov  
(404) 562-9637

---

Shannon L. Richardson, Regional Hearing Clerk  
r4\_regional\_hearing\_clerk@epa.gov