

Opportunity to Comment and Information Meeting about Ash Grove Cement's Mercury Reduction Plan



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Eastern Region Air Quality

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Purpose of this Notice

The purpose of this notice is to invite you to an information meeting about Ash Grove Cement's Mercury Reduction Plan for their Durkee, Oregon cement manufacturing plant.

This notice is also an announcement of the public's and Tribal Nations' opportunity to provide written comment on the Mutual Agreement and Order (MAO) between the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and Ash Grove Cement.

Meeting details:

The information meeting is Wednesday, March 19th and begins at 6:00 p.m.:
Geiser Grand Hotel
1996 Main Street
Baker City, OR 97814

Who might have an interest in attending?

People who work, live, and recreate in the area.

What will happen at this meeting?

Representatives from Ash Grove Cement will present the results of a pilot project which studied a technology never used before to remove mercury from cement kiln emissions.

DEQ will present recommendations from a special Advisory Committee that was tasked with setting a mercury reduction goal and timeline for installing control equipment at the plant. DEQ will also explain the mechanism, the MAO, for formalizing the mercury reduction plan. You will have the opportunity to ask questions.

How is air quality affected?

Thermal processing of the ingredients used in cement manufacturing, particularly limestone which is mined from a quarry located next to the plant in Durkee, results in the release of naturally-occurring mercury. Mercury emissions leave the plant in three different forms: elemental, particulate-bound, and reactive-gaseous (oxidized) mercury.

What legal requirements apply?

There is currently no state or federal regulations for the control of mercury emissions from existing cement manufacturing kilns. Costs for new control equipment could be as high as \$20 million.

How Does Mercury Affect Me?

Mercury is considered a Hazardous Air Pollutant (HAP) because it is a persistent and potent nerve toxin. Global emissions, produced primarily from the worldwide practice of burning coal and other industrial processes such as cement manufacturing are deposited in Oregon's water bodies through rain fall. This can cause mercury to accumulate in fish tissue at high levels. Consumption of mercury-contaminated fish is the most common way humans are exposed to this toxic pollutant.

For more information about mercury, go to: [What is Mercury and Why Is It a Problem?](#)

For more information about hazardous air pollutants, go to: [Health Effects Notebook for Hazardous Air Pollutants \(US EPA\)](#)

DEQ's Role

DEQ is responsible for protecting and enhancing Oregon's water and air quality, for cleaning up spills and releases of hazardous materials, and for managing the proper disposal of hazardous and solid wastes. DEQ does this by establishing regulatory requirements, including requirements to obtain permits for certain activities. DEQ issues permits to regulate the type and amount of air emissions at certain facilities.

Studying the Problem

There are no state or federal mercury emission limits for existing cement kilns. Therefore, Ash Grove is working voluntarily with DEQ to identify emission limits that are protective of public health and the environment. Since 2006, Ash Grove has conducted comprehensive mercury emissions testing with a subsequent pilot study using an experimental technology known as 'powdered activated carbon injection' or PAC.

If you received a hard copy of this notice in the mail, please consider receiving updates via e-mail instead. Send your request to: subscriptions@deq.state.or.us

Please include your full name, e-mail address and mailing address so that we can purge you from our print mailing list, thus saving trees and taxpayer dollars.

The pilot study demonstrated that mercury removal efficiencies between 65% and 90% are possible at the Durkee Plant, depending on the PAC injection rate and whether the raw mill is off-line or on-line.

In late 2007, DEQ convened an advisory committee to review the findings of Ash Grove's pilot study and to recommend a mercury emissions reduction goal and implementation schedule to DEQ.

The Advisory Committee consisted of science and medical doctors, toxicologists, representatives from Baker County, environmental interest groups, The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the company.

Setting a Mercury Reduction Goal

The Committee recommended a percent reduction target of 85% with a fallback target of 75% if it is demonstrated that 85% is not achievable despite the best efforts of Ash Grove Cement to achieve 85%.

Formalizing the Mercury Reduction Plan

A mechanism referred to as a "Mutual Agreement and Order" (MAO) is being used to formalize the mercury emissions reduction plan between Ash Grove and DEQ. The MAO is a formal action between DEQ and Ash Grove with an agreed-upon timeline for control reductions as well as monitoring requirements. There are also stipulated penalties in the event Ash Grove does not meet the agreed-upon dates.

The Committee recommended that the MAO not penalize Ash Grove as long as the plant ultimately achieves a minimum control efficiency of 75%. The Committee recommended the use of alternative limits if 75% is not achievable, similar to those established in the recently adopted Utility Mercury Rule.

Written Comments Requested

DEQ requests those wishing to comment on the MAO submit written comments.

Written Comments due: Written comments are due: 5 p.m., Friday, March 28, 2008. Comments can be submitted, via mail, email or fax.

Where can I send my comments?

To: Linda Hayes-Gorman
Phone: (541) 388-6146, ext. 274 or toll free (866) 863-6668
Mail: 300 SE Reed Market Road, Bend, OR 97702
Fax: 541-388-8283
Email: [Linda Hayes-Gorman](mailto:Linda.Hayes-Gorman@deq.state.or.us)

Where can I get background information?

DEQ's Report on the Committee's recommendations and a copy of the Draft Memorandum of Agreement and Order are viewable online by clicking the following link(s):

[DRAFT Mutual Agreement and Order Advisory Committee Report](#)

Or contact:

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What happens after the meeting?

DEQ will review written comments submitted by the public and Tribal Members and consider these in finalizing the MAO with Ash Grove. The agreed-upon reduction goals and timeline for installing the control equipment will be incorporated into the facility's Title V operating permit.

Accessibility information

DEQ is committed to accommodating people with disabilities. Please notify DEQ of any special physical or language accommodations or if you need information in large print, Braille or another format. To make these arrangements, contact DEQ Communications & Outreach (503) 229-5696 or toll free in Oregon at (800) 452-4011; fax to 503-229-6762; or e-mail to deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.

People with hearing impairments may call DEQ's TTY number, (503) 229-6993.

