



10 V.S.A §8019 Civil Citation
Natural Resources Board

Citation Number: 2022_70
VC: NR115 2nd Violation

Respondent: Roblee Farm, Inc., Mark Mason, Craig Mason, and Charles Mason

Address: 608 Kelley Hill Road

City, State, Zip: Pawlet, VT 05761

Respondent committed the following acts in violation of Vermont Law, Statute, Rule, or Permit:

Violation Citation: Violation of an Act 250 rule or an Act 250 permit

Description: On June 15, 2022, Ridgerunner Drilling and Blasting, LLC, conducted a blast at Roblee Farm, 608 Kelley Hill Rd. for Chet McLellan. Mr. McLellan is an operator for Roblee Farm, Inc., which is under Land Use Permit (LUP)1R0932-2. Exhibit 35 specifies the maximum explosive total weight per blast of 4,000 pounds and the maximum pounds per delay of 125 pounds. The blasting report indicated the total pounds were 7,251 and 181.2 pounds per delay. These amounts exceeded LUP 1R0932-2.

Town: Pawlet

Date: 06/15/2022

Penalties: If you plead ADMITTED or NO CONTEST, you may pay the waiver amount instead of appearing in court. If you plead DENIED and the State proves the violation, the penalty must be within the penalty range plus any court costs.

Penalty Range: Minimum \$ 300.00 Maximum \$ 1500.00 Waiver \$ 1125.00

Mailed to: Respondent, Roblee Farm, Inc. c/o John Thrasher

Mailing Address: PO Box 100

City, State, Zip: Rupert, VT 05768

Date Mailed/Served: November 21, 2022 by U.S. Mail

NRB Compliance and Enforcement Officer Michaela Stickney Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Public Notice & Opportunity to Comment: I certify that a draft of this civil citation was posted for public notice and written comment for a period of 30 days. [Checked]

Comments were received and are attached [Checked] No comments were received [Unchecked]

Service Members Civil Relief Act Affidavit: Under oath, I state Respondent is NOT on active duty in the U.S. armed forces because: Respondent is a Business or Corporation

NRB Compliance and Enforcement Officer Michaela Stickney Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

Signed and sworn at State of Vermont, County of Washington, on 11/21/2022, before me,

[Handwritten Signature]
Notary Public State of Vermont
Printed Name: Katie Emerson
Commission No. 157,006925
My Commission Expires 1/31/2023

[Notary Stamp]

Respondent's Plea to this Civil Citation

Mark ("X") your plea: Admitted [Unchecked] No Contest [Unchecked] Denied [Unchecked]

Respondent or Corporate Officer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

GENERAL INFORMATION – KEEP THIS PAGE FOR REFERENCE

Background

You are charged with a civil violation within the jurisdiction of the Superior Court Environmental Division of Vermont *pursuant to 10 V.S.A. Section 8019*. The Environmental Division is designed to allow you to speak for yourself without an attorney, but you may hire an attorney at your own expense. The Environmental Division will not provide an attorney to you, and its staff will not provide legal advice to you. The Environmental Court does, however, offer a free legal clinic to provide legal assistance for those unable to afford an attorney. Please visit the following for more information: <https://www.vermontjudiciary.org/environmental/legal-services>

If you plead “Admitted” or “No Contest” to the alleged violation, then you may waive your right to appear in Court and pay the waiver amount.

If you plead “Denied” to the alleged violation, then you will be scheduled to appear in court at least once. A corporation must have an attorney or corporate officer (i.e. president, vice president) appear in court. A minor should be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

The trial is a summary hearing without a jury. You and the State may offer testimony and exhibits into evidence. All witnesses must appear in person and testify truthfully under oath. Written statements usually are excluded from the evidence.

The issuer of the citation will serve as the prosecutor, unless an attorney for the State is present to prosecute the case. The judge will not discuss the case with you or the prosecutor, except in Court at a hearing. The judge does not have authority to issue a 'warning,' even when leniency is appropriate. The decision to issue a warning, rather than file a citation, rests with the prosecutor.

The burden of proof is on the State to prove the violation by a preponderance of the evidence, which is defined as the violation is more likely than not to have occurred. If the State satisfies the burden of proof, then judgment will be entered against you. If the State fails to meet the burden of proof, the case will be dismissed.

Most decisions are delivered orally in Court at the end of the hearing, but some decisions are issued in writing and mailed to the parties. Occasionally, more than one hearing is required for the judge to reach a decision.

Plea and Payment

All pleadings must be sent to both the Environmental Division and the Natural Resources Board. All payments must be sent to the Natural Resources Board.

How to Plea

Admitted or No Contest

If you plead “Admitted” or “No Contest:” mark your plea and sign at the bottom of the citation. **Within 15 days of the date mailed/served on the citation, (1) send the plea to the Environmental Division and (2) send a copy of the plea along with payment of the waiver amount to the Natural Resources Board.** After the Environmental Division receives the plea, a judgment will be entered against you.

Denied

If you plead “Denied:” mark your plea and sign at the bottom of the citation. **Within 15 days of the date mailed/served on the citation, (1) send the plea to the Environmental Division and (2) send a copy of the plea to the Natural Resources Board.** The Environmental Division will then schedule a hearing.

YOU MUST DELIVER A PLEA WITHIN 15 DAYS, otherwise judgment will be entered against you by default and you will be liable for the assessed penalty.

How to Pay

Payments can be made via check.

Checks must be made payable to “State of Vermont” and sent to:

Natural Resources Board
10 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-3803

Failure to Pay and/or Correct the Violation

If judgment is entered against you and you fail to pay the penalty amount, and/or fail to correct the subject violation, your ability to obtain or operate under a Natural Resources Board permit may be affected, and additional enforcement action may be pursued.

Copying All Parties

Any other pleading, letter, motion, or other correspondence to the Environmental Division related to this civil citation must also be sent to the Natural Resources Board. The Environmental Division intends to digitally scan all written correspondence, therefore, all correspondence should be typed on white letter-sized paper (8 ½ in. by 11 in.) and signed in black or dark blue ink.

Appearance by Third Parties

Under state law (*10 V.S.A. Section 8020*), a third party may file a request with the Environmental Division to be heard on the sufficiency of the civil citation. If a request is filed, and the Environmental Division decides to allow the third party to appear, you will be notified and given the opportunity to respond.

Additional Enforcement Action

By issuing a civil citation, the issuing entity will not be able to seek an additional penalty for the violation specified in the citation if the waiver penalty is paid, judgment is entered after trial or appeal, or a default judgment is entered. However, the issuing entity may issue additional civil citations or take other enforcement action authorized by law when a violation is continuing or repeated. It may also bring an enforcement action to obtain injunctive relief or remediation, and may recover the costs of bringing that action and any economic benefit obtained as a result of the underlying violation as authorized by law.

Contact Information

The Environmental Division and the Natural Resources Board are open Monday through Friday, except state holidays, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

Vermont Superior Court, Environmental Division
32 Cherry Street, 2nd Floor, Suite 303
Burlington, VT 05401
[phone] (802) 951-1740 [web] www.vermontjudiciary.org

Natural Resources Board
10 Baldwin Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-3803
[phone] (802) 828-3309 [email] NRB.Enforcement@vermont.gov
[web] nrb.vermont.gov/enforcement

From: Michael Wesko <mjwconst@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2022 8:50 AM
To: Stickney, Michaela; Stone, Alison; Haskell, Sabina
Subject: Re: Roblee Citation 10/24/2022

EXTERNAL SENDER: Do not open attachments or click on links unless you recognize and trust the sender.

I have not heard back from you as to where I may post a comment for this year's blasting violation of Roblee Farm, Inc. and Chet McLellan Trucking.

Here is my comment. They have blasted 3 times since obtaining Act 250 permit series #1R0932. They have 3 violations for blasting, one for each event, which demonstrates a 100% failure rate. The first time they blasted the permit specifically stated that blasting was not allowed. An AOD issued in 2008 and signed by Roblee Farm, Inc. clearly listed the requirements to include blasting in the future as well as a fine/penalty for the unauthorized blast in 2007. The second blast in 2021 they failed to notify adjoining land owners as required in the revised 1R0932 permit. Multiple neighbors complained of rattled items on shelves and windows. The recent blast in 2022 nearly doubled the total weight allowed per blasting event although they did notify adjoining landowners this time. I did make mention in my complaint of the 2021 blast that the vibrations were excessive for the total weight allowed and if investigated would most likely show that the 2021 blast also exceeded the allowed maximum weight. Comparing the 2021 and 2022 blasts the 2021 blast appeared to have stronger vibrations. This year's citation carries a maximum penalty of \$1,500.00 for the violation. From a business standpoint it makes sense to exceed the maximum weight per blast as it costs less to produce more material per event. The \$1,500.00 fine is negligible when you're producing twice the amount of material for extraction as allowed by the permit conditions. Enforcement which does not result in providing a monetary deterrent to prevent future violations is "just the cost of doing business". How many times can Roblee Farm, Inc. violate the conditions of the permit and continue to operate?

Michael Wesko

On Thu, Oct 20, 2022 at 7:03 PM Michael Wesko <mjwconst@gmail.com> wrote:

Michaela, I went online to submit a comment on the blasting citation due by 10/24/2022 and it is no longer listed on your website. Please advise where I can comment before the deadline.

Thank you,
Mike Wesko