



# Public Service Commission

## State of North Dakota

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### COMMISSIONERS

Julie Fedorchak  
Randy Christmann  
Brian Kroshus

600 East Boulevard, Dept. 408  
Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0480  
Web: [www.psc.nd.gov](http://www.psc.nd.gov)  
E-mail: [ndpsc@nd.gov](mailto:ndpsc@nd.gov)  
Phone: 701-328-2400  
ND Toll Free: 1-877-245-6685  
Fax: 701-328-2410  
TDD: 800-366-6888 or 711

*sent via email and certified mail*

November 5, 2021

Mr. Scott Aberle  
General Mine Manager  
Westmoreland Beulah Mining LLC  
Beulah Mine  
P.O. Box 39  
Beulah, ND 58523-0039  
[saberle@westmoreland.com](mailto:saberle@westmoreland.com)

Dear Mr. Aberle:

Enclosed is a copy of the Commission's order in Case No. RC-21-419, Notice of Violation No. 2101, issued to Westmoreland Beulah Mining LLC for the Beulah Mine. This order assesses a \$1,750 civil penalty for seriousness (\$750) and negligence (\$1,250) with a deduction of (\$250) for good faith as explained in the order. WBM is unable to appeal this order and penalty because an informal conference or formal hearing was not requested within 30 days of the issuance of the Notice of Violation. The \$1,750 penalty must be paid within 30 days of receipt of this letter.

If you have any questions, please contact this office.

Sincerely,

Zanna Brinkman  
Director  
Reclamation Division

Enclosure

cc w/ enclosure via email only:     Jeff Fleischman ([jfleischman@osmre.gov](mailto:jfleischman@osmre.gov))  
   John Sieving ([jsieving@osmre.gov](mailto:jsieving@osmre.gov))  
   Jesse Noel ([jnoel@westmoreland.com](mailto:jnoel@westmoreland.com))  
   Dicki Peterson ([dpeterson@westmoreland.com](mailto:dpeterson@westmoreland.com))

Beulah Mine (Dakota Westmoreland)\Violations\2021\NOV-2101\NOV-2101\_Order\_cvr\_itr\_11-5-21

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**  
**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**Westmoreland Beulah Mining LLC**  
**Notice of Violation No. 2101**  
**Violation**

**Case No. RC-21-419**

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND ORDER**

**November 3, 2021**

**Preliminary Statement**

On August 18, 2021, the Reclamation Division of the Public Service Commission (Commission) issued Notice of Violation (NOV) 2101 to the Westmoreland Beulah Mining LLC (WBM, formerly DWC) for sediment deposition on reclaimed topsoil and for failure to maintain appropriate sediment control measures.

WBM installed the prescribed remedial measures within the required abatement time periods. The NOV was terminated on October 11, 2021. WBM did not request an informal conference or a formal hearing in the matter.

**Findings of Fact**

1. WBM is engaged in surface coal mining operations at the Beulah Mine under permits issued by the Commission.
2. NOV 2101 states, and the Commission finds, that WBM violated North Dakota Century Code (NDCC) Subsection 38-14.1-24(4) for failure to protect reclaimed areas to effectively prevent sediment deposition, North Dakota Administrative Code (NDAC) 69-05.2-16-01(1) and 69-05.2-16-08 for failure to install and maintain sediment control measures, NDAC 69-05.2-24-01(2)(a) for failure to control or prevent erosion from dragline walkway corridor and Permit KR5B-8603 for failure to install and maintain sediment control measures as stated in Section 3.1.
3. The violation was initially noticed during our review of the June 2021 flyover photographs of the Beulah Mine and was subsequently ground inspected July 27, 2021.
4. WBM completed the remedial actions specified in the notice of violation within the prescribed time periods.
5. WBM did not contest the notice of violation by requesting an informal conference or formal hearing.
6. Commission staff terminated NOV 2101 on October 11, 2021.

7. As required by North Dakota Administrative Code Section 69-05.2-28-12, the Commission considers the following four factors in determining the amount of any civil penalty: (1) history of previous violations; (2) seriousness; (3) negligence; and (4) good faith in attempting to achieve compliance.
8. The Commission finds that assessment of a civil penalty based on the history of previous violations at the Beulah Mine is not warranted. The former mine operator, DWC, received one other violation within the past three years. A penalty for history is usually not assessed unless more than three violations are issued within three years.
9. The Commission finds that this violation was serious in that appropriate surface water management was not in place as required by NDAC 69.05.2-16 and that some environmental damage did occur. Sediment deposition adversely affected topsoil on reclaimed hayland. A penalty based on seriousness is warranted.
10. The Commission finds that WBM's violation was not due to reckless or willful conduct. Nonetheless, the NOV resulted from WBM's failure to maintain sediment control measures from the dragline walkway corridor. The failure was due to lack of diligence and ordinary negligence. A penalty for negligence is warranted.
11. The Commission finds that WBM's abatement of the NOV was prompt. A deduction from the penalty may be made when extraordinary measures are taken to abate a violation in the shortest possible time following notification of the violation. A deduction for good faith is warranted.
12. Based on these facts, the Commission should assess a penalty totaling \$1,750 for NOV 2101; \$750 for seriousness, \$1,250 for negligence, and a deduction of \$250 for good faith.

From the foregoing Findings of Fact, the Commission now makes its:

#### **Conclusions of Law**

1. The Commission has jurisdiction over surface coal mining and reclamation operations conducted by WBM in North Dakota.
2. WBM violated the provisions of North Dakota Century Code Subsection 38-14.1-24(4) and North Dakota Administrative Code 69-05.2-16-01(1), 69-05.2-16-08, 69-05.2-2-24-01(2)(a), and Section 3.1 of Permit KRSB-8603.
3. A civil penalty for NOV 2101 is warranted.

From the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, the Commission makes the following:

## Order

The Commission orders:

1. Notice of Violation No. 2101 is affirmed.
2. Westmoreland Beulah Mining LLC is assessed a total civil penalty of \$1,750 (\$750 for seriousness, \$1,250 for negligence and a deduction of \$250 for good faith) for the violation. The penalty must be paid within thirty days of receipt of this Order.
3. The proceeding is closed upon WBM's timely payment of the penalty.

### PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Randy Christmann  
Commissioner

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Julie Fedorchak  
Chair

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brian Kroshus  
Commissioner

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**Scott Aberle**  
**General Manager**  
**Dakota Westmoreland Corporation**  
**Beulah Mine**  
**PO Box 39**  
**Beulah, ND 58523-0039**



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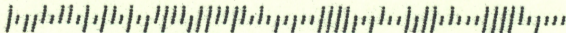
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**Scott Aberle**  
**General Manager**  
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