

**INQUIRY INTO PERFORMANCE OF THE NSW
ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AUTHORITY**

Name: Mr Doug Bathersby

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Partially Confidential

The Secretary,
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5.,
NSW Parliament,
Macquarie Street,
Sydney NSW.
2 August 2014.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have observed that there is to be a Parliamentary Inquiry into the performance of the New South Wales Environment Protection Authority and I believe that as they have been obviously guilty of neglect in relation to controlling the stench from Elf Farm Supplies for over twenty years they should be investigated. The history of Elf Farm Supplies polluting the air in the Hawkesbury and the lack of care and responsibility by the EPA is as follows:

- Over twenty years ago Hawkesbury City Council approved the construction of a Composting Facility at 108 Mulgrave Road Mulgrave, 2756, near Windsor. Later Council approved the construction of more "tunnels" and with the construction of the first stage a foul stench started leaking from the site 24/7 from day one.
- No action was taken by Council to eliminate the stench and to solve their problem they handed the licensing and control over to the EPA, whilst still retaining approval for Development Applications.
- Over the years the facility grew, DA approved by Council and stench tolerated by the EPA whilst ignoring the hundreds of complaints lodged by the Hawkesbury community. On one occasion we understand that an increase in "tunnels" at Elf was approved under delegated authority by a Council officer without going to a full Council meeting.
- Eventually after more than twenty years of being ignored by the EPA and Council, in 2013 a group of residents formed the group; "Stop the Stink in Windsor", contacted the EPA and arranged for three members of the group to have a meeting with him.
- As a result of that meeting the EPA promised to investigate the stench emanating from Elf Farm Supplies at Mulgrave and report back to the S.T.S.I.W. Group. He eventually notified the S.T.S.I.W. group that the EPA had engaged the services of a private company, The Odour Unit Pty Ltd (TOU) to conduct a baseline regional odour assessment covering the McGraths Hill/Mulgrave/Windsor area of North Western Sydney.
- This assessment commenced on 20 May 2013 and was completed on 24 June 2013. Over the years when the finger was pointed at Elf Farm Supplies, they always denied responsibility and claimed that Councils two Sewage Treatment Works at South Windsor and Mulgrave were responsible for the stench.
- Many residents traveling by train and stopping at Mulgrave reported that the stench was always present approaching and leaving the vicinity of Elf. At the Windsor High School staff constantly reported a foul stench in the vicinity but always stated that it was not a sewage smell but a chemical/ compost stench. The local hospital staff, patients and visitors are always reporting the foul stench when they enter and leave the front door of the hospital.
- At the conclusion of The Odour Unit assessment, The Odour Unit released a report ; The Odour Unit; McGraths Hill, Mulgrave, Windsor Field Ambient Odour Assessment Study; Prepared for the NSW Environment Protection Authority;

McGraths Hill, Windsor, NSW; Final Report; August 2013. Both of Council Sewage Treatment Works were completely cleared of any responsibility for the foul stench emanating over the years of the foul stench emanating from the McGraths Hill/Mulgrave/Windsor area but but sheeted home the blame entirely to Elf Farm Supplies at 108 Mulgrave Road Mulgrave 2756.

- The EPA then directed Elf Farm Supplies to carry out remedial works to eliminate the stench coming out of Elf 24/7 and at differing intensities but constantly there. The direction from the EPA was; "Pollution Studies and Reduction Programs" and was to be completed no later than 31 October. This program obviously did not work as we were informed that the services of the contractor had been terminated and a new contractor appointed, The Odour Unit Pty. Ltd. Of particular concern to residents of the Hawkesbury is that Elf Farm Supplies engaged the services of the Odour Unit presumably/supposedly to stop the stench escaping from the facility.

Since The Odour Unit was appointed nothing has changed, the stench is constant around the clock depending on wind direction and sometimes it is still there with no wind present.

Questions to the Minister:

- The Hawkesbury community, having suffered the effects of noxious and toxic chemicals that are emitted by the poisonous plume from the exhaust stack around the clock for over twenty years and seeing the failure of Elf to satisfy the EPA orders, are we to expect a succession of contractors to be hired by Elf to fix the problem but unable to do so, because they do not have the technology?
- Would you agree that as Elf have polluted past their boundaries in defiance of their license, that they should show cause as to why they should not be shut down immediately?

Yours Sincerely

Doug Bathersby