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Submitted electronically via Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) portal

August 6, 2021

Mr. Sean Avery
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
Technical Assessment and Standards Development Branch
40 St. Clair Avenue West, Floor 7
Toronto, Ontario
M4V 1M2

RE: Domtar comments on Guidelines to address odour mixtures in Ontario - ERO Number 019-2768.

Dear Mr. Avery:

Domtar appreciates the opportunity to provide the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) input on the proposed Guidelines to address odour mixtures in Ontario. As proposed, we have concerns with the administrative burden and costs associated with the Odour Technology Benchmark Report. There needs to be the appropriate balance of benefits and costs to ensure businesses in Ontario and not overburdened and disadvantaged compared to competitors in other jurisdictions.

Domtar Corporation (Domtar) is a designer, manufacturer, marketer and leading provider of a wide variety of fiber-based products including communication papers, specialty and packaging papers and airlaid nonwovens. We are driven by a commitment to turn sustainable wood fiber into useful products that people rely on every day. The foundation of our business is a network of fiber converting assets that produce paper-grade, fluff and specialty pulps. While most of our pulp production is consumed internally to manufacture paper and consumer products, we are also a large volume pulp exporter. Domtar is the largest integrated marketer of uncoated freesheet paper in North America. In addition, we manage over 10.8 million hectares of forest lands in Ontario and Quebec.

Domtar has pulp and paper making operations in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and the in United States. In Ontario, Domtar operates a pulp mill in Dryden and a specialty pulp and paper mill in Espanola. Together these operations directly employ over 880 people in the North and indirectly employ an estimated 2,200 additional people through harvesting contractors, vendors, suppliers, contracted services and more. We also support indigenous interests and communities with our forest management activities and fiber supply agreements.

Domtar supports the Government of Ontario initiatives to protect the health of its communities. Domtar is committed to sustainable manufacturing for our pulp and paper products and to maintaining a clean and healthy environment in the areas that we operate.

We feel government and industry should work together to address odours that are a concern for Ontario communities. Due to unique and site-specific circumstances, these odour issues are best resolved by government on a case-by-case basis. A “one-size fits all” approach usually means it doesn’t work well for anyone and will create significant burden and red tape.

The proposed Guideline includes a requirement to prepare an Odour Technology Benchmark Report (OTBR) for odour mixtures. This report requires facilities to:

- Identify all odour sources and activities including fugitive and intermittent sources from process operations including periods of startup and shutdown and upset conditions. Develop a comprehensive list of all potential odour sources.
- Review of odour reduction measures, off-property odour dispersion modelling for a proposed new facility or modifications to an existing facility.
- List of technically feasible pollution controls and strategies for the facility to reduce odour.
- Ranking of all options and combinations of options based on reducing odour at off-property locations.
- Develop an odour abatement plan.
- Be prepared to implement odour abatement strategies when an odour situation arises to minimize community impact.

Preparing an OTBR for a complex manufacturing facility such as a pulp and paper mill is a huge undertaking and will require significant staff time, external consultant resources and significant cost. This requirement is very onerous and unnecessary. Many facilities will expend significant time, resources, and dollars to develop and a very comprehensive report that will never be used. If there are bad actors and repeat offenders, then MECP should focus attention on those facilities and not place unnecessary costs and additional red tape on everyone.

Domtar recommends removing this requirement and only triggering the need for an OTBR when there is a pattern of legitimate complaints that require further action be taken.

An OTBR will be required when opening an Environmental Compliance Approval (ECA). The Guideline should clarify that an odour assessment may be required for a new facility or for a new process that may have odour. The assessment should not be required when modifying an existing facility that will not have a new odour.

A facility should not be subject to an odour assessment because it is expanding or modernizing. As Ontario transitions to a low carbon economy, industrial facilities will be implementing their transition plans to lower carbon emissions. Any needed changes to a facility ECA for reducing carbon emission should not automatically trigger the need for this comprehensive odour assessment report which will add cost and delay these projects. In addition, the accompanying proposed Land Use Compatibility Guideline could be another barrier for expanding manufacturing in Ontario.

MECP should provide additional clarification for landfills and wastewater treatment plants to resolve potential conflicts with the proposed Guideline and other regulatory requirements.

The Guidelines propose Ontario labs to receive accreditation within 2 years for odour testing. As MECP notes in the proposal materials, odour testing is very subjective. If the accreditation process takes longer than 2 years, MECP should identify a contingency plan so facilities that need to test are not left in the dark.

Odour testing is not an exact science thereby producing sample results that can be quite variable. This has the potential to create practical and liability implications resulting in additional expense for a facility, could impact/stress community relationships and damage company reputations. MECP should consider a process for resolution when 2 or more “approved” labs generate differing results for a sample. The regulated community should not be put in the position to resolve when required by MECP to perform a very subjective test.

We encourage MECP to reconsider its Guideline proposal and the negative impact it can have on the business community and on Ontario’s economy and jobs. The proposed odour requirements are very onerous, will add significant administrative burden, increase costs for preparing very extensive reviews and assessment reports that may never be needed or used. Legitimate odour complaints and legitimate odour complaints from repeat offenders need to be addressed. However, that should occur on a case-by-case basis and not require all facilities to go through an expensive and burdensome process.

If MECP feels it needs to finalize the Guidelines as proposed, then MECP should work with sectors to modify the existing Technical Standards, as an alternative to the requirements in the Odour Guideline, especially for exiting sources. Requiring facilities to work under both approaches creates confusion and inefficient use of resources which adds costs, additional burden and delays implementation of new projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the proposed Guidelines to address odour mixtures. If you have any questions or to arrange for further discussions, please contact me via mobile phone at (715) 459-9257 or via email at annabeth.reitter@domtar.com.

Sincerely,



Annabeth Reitter
Corporate Manager, Environmental Regulations