



THE UNITED STATES
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United States Attorney's Office
District of Oregon

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**Company Operating Aluminum Processing Facility in The Dalles Pleads
Guilty to Clean Air Act Violations**

PORTLAND, Ore.—On January 24, 2023, an Illinois-based company that operates an aluminum processing facility in The Dalles, Oregon, pleaded guilty to violating the Clean Air Act by negligently releasing a hazardous air pollutant from its facility, endangering employees and nearby community members.

Hydro Extrusion USA (Hydro), a limited liability corporation based in Rosemont, Illinois, pleaded guilty to negligent endangerment by discharging a hazardous pollutant.

“No cost savings or competitive advantage are worth the risk posed to the health and safety of Hydro’s workers or members of the community,” said Ethan Knight, Chief of the Economic Crimes Unit for the U.S. Attorney’s Office. “We will continue working closely with our partners at the EPA to ensure all businesses play by the rules.”

“By illegally melting contaminated scrap metal, the defendant knowingly and unlawfully violated environmental regulations and in doing so exposed their workers and the local community to hazardous air pollutants,” said Special Agent in Charge Scot Adair of the Environmental Protection Agency’s criminal investigation program in Oregon. “EPA, along with its state partners, are committed to holding companies accountable when they endanger the health of their employees and local communities.”

According to court documents, Hydro operates a secondary aluminum processing facility in The Dalles where it melts aluminum scrap in induction furnaces to produce reusable aluminum billets. While operating, air emissions from the company’s furnaces were open to the interior of the building and did not pass through any pollution control devices before reaching employees or being vented to ambient air.

Under the Clean Air Act, secondary aluminum production facilities are only permitted to use “clean charge,” aluminum scrap free of paints, coatings or lubricants. Despite this requirement, from July 2018 through June 2019, Hydro acquired and melted scrap aluminum coated in a mineral-oil based mixture that, when combusted, produced hazardous smoke. Hydro saved approximately \$466,000 purchasing the unclean charge. During this time, Hydro employees noticed excessive smoke in the facility. Despite being notified by inspectors from EPA and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (Oregon DEQ), Hydro continued melting the unclean charge.

On August 23, 2022, after fully cooperating with the government's investigation of this matter and agreeing to plead guilty, Hydro was [charged](#) by federal criminal information with one count of negligent endangerment.

Negligent endangerment under the Clean Air Act is punishable by a fine of up to \$200,000 or twice the gross gains or losses resulting from the offense. As part of its plea agreement, Hydro has agreed to pay \$550,125 prior to sentencing. The company will be sentenced on April 24, 2023, by U.S. District Court Judge Michael W. Mosman.

This case was investigated by the EPA Criminal Investigation Division (EPA-CID) with assistance from Oregon DEQ. It is being prosecuted by Ryan W. Bounds, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon.

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