

One of the world's largest seafood processors will pay \$2.5 million to resolve Clean Air Act violations

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Trident Seafoods Corp., one of the world's largest seafood processors, has agreed to pay a \$2.5 million civil penalty and to invest \$30-40 million to reduce their discharge of seafood processing waste by more than 100 million pounds annually as a part of a settlement to resolve alleged violations of the Clean Water Act. The Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") and the Department of Justice ("DOJ") led the investigation of Trident Seafoods and found more than 480 Clean Water Act violations. Mostly the settlement agreement addresses the discharge of seafood processing waste, which piles on the seafloor and creates oxygen-depleted, unsuitable habitats for marine species.

Trident Seafood's Alaska plants process pollock, salmon, herring, cod, and crab into fillets and meat, and turn the leftover portions of the bodies into fishmeal that's used as feed at fish farms. After the meat has been removed, the processing facilities treat the leftover bones and scraps, and some of this protein slurry is discharged into the ocean. The slurry settles on the sea floor, covering it with a thin film of fish paste. Microbes experience a population explosion by feeding on this protein, but then they use up all the oxygen, creating dead zones where fish and other marine organisms cannot live. These waste piles can be enormous. Trident has contributed to a seafood processing waste pile that is estimated to be more than 50 acres in size.

The EPA alleged that Trident Seafoods had more than 480 Clean Water Act violations at several of their Alaskan processing plants including discharging without a permit, exceeding discharge limits, failing to comply with permit restrictions on discharge locations, and failing to conduct required monitoring of discharged wastes. The agreement requires Trident to build a fishmeal plant in Naknek, Alaska that can handle 30 million pounds of seafood processing waste annually. Trident Seafoods has also agreed to reduce the amount of waste discharged from four of their processing plants. Furthermore, the company has undertaken remediation measures including studying seafloor waste piles to determine how best to address the environmental dangers associated with these waste piles.

Both the EPA and the DOJ view this settlement agreement as a significant step towards ensuring Trident Seafoods is in compliance with the Clean Water Act and protecting the quality of Alaskan waters, which is a critical habitat for the American seafood industry. The EPA is hopeful that this large settlement agreement will have a ripple effect with other seafood processing companies in the Northwest, thereby increasing Clean Water Act compliance and protecting the fragile marine ecosystem.