



State of Mississippi

TATE REEVES
Governor

MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

CHRIS WELLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

August 22, 2025

Mr. Blaine Lafontaine
Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission
14054 Fred and Al Key Road
Kiln, MS 39556
228-493-5846
blafontaine@hcphc.ms

Dear Mr. Lafontaine:

Re: Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission
Stennis International Airport Site 2 Apron
Hancock County
COE No. SAM-2024-01083-GSC
WQC No. WQC2025012

Pursuant to Section 401 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U. S. C. 1251, 1341), the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) issues this Certification, after public notice and opportunity for public hearing, to the Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission, an applicant for a Federal License or permit to conduct the following activity:

Hancock County Port and Harbor Commission, Stennis International Airport, Site 2 Apron: Project area is approximately 3.0 acres in size, is located adjacent to existing aircraft infrastructure (aprons, hangars, and taxiways), and has been previously cleared and graded during construction of the airport runways and taxiways, and is currently maintained by mowing. Project will result in the discharge of 1,400 cubic yards of clean fill material into approximately 1.77 acres of emergent wetlands for the construction of a 105,000 sq. ft. aircraft parking and staging apron. The applicant will provide in-kind compensatory mitigation through an approved mitigation bank located within the service area [SAM-2024-010830962-CSP; WQC2025012].

MDEQ certifies that the above-described activity will be in compliance with the applicable provisions of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act

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and Section 49-17-29 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, if the applicant complies with the following conditions:

1. All fill material and excavation areas shall have side slopes of 3:1 (horizontal:vertical) or flatter and shall be immediately seeded, stabilized and maintained. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
2. Appropriate best management practices (BMPs) shall be properly installed and maintained to prevent the movement of sediment off-site and into adjacent drainage areas. Special care shall be taken prior to and during construction to prevent the movement of sediment into adjacent avoided wetland areas. In the event of any BMP failure, corrective actions shall be taken immediately. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
3. For construction projects from one (1) to less than five (5) acres of total ground disturbances including clearing, grading, excavating or other construction activities shall follow the conditions and limitations of the MDEQ's Storm Water Small Construction General NPDES Permit. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
4. The applicant shall maintain compliance with the Industrial Stormwater General Permit. For any changes or construction of additional phase to the facility, modifications to the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan shall be made as outlined in the Industrial Stormwater General Permit. (Statement F) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 1.1.1.B.)
5. Mitigation for the impacts of 1.77 acre of emergent wetlands shall be provided by the purchase of mitigation credits from an approved mitigation bank. The number of credits must be in accordance with banking prospectus and be based upon that required for impacting 1.77 acre of emergent wetlands. Written verification of credit purchase must be provided to MDEQ prior to the commencement of any work in the wetland or stream areas. (Statement E) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R 1.3.4 A (2))
6. Turbidity outside the limits of a 750-foot mixing zone shall not exceed the ambient turbidity by more than 50 Nephelometric Turbidity Units. (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R.2.2.A.(3))
7. No sewage, oil, refuse, or other pollutants shall be discharged into the watercourse. (Statement A) (11 Miss. Admin. Code Pt. 6, R. 2.2.A.(3))

As part of the Scope of Review for Application Decisions, 11 Mississippi Administrative Code Part 6, Rule 1.3.4(B), the above conditions are necessary for the Department to ensure that appropriate measures will be taken to eliminate unreasonable degradation and irreparable harm to waters of the State, such that the activity will not meet the criteria for denial:

- (A) The proposed activity permanently alters the aquatic ecosystem such that water quality criteria are violated and/or it no longer supports its existing or classified uses. An example is the channelization of streams.
- (B) There is a feasible alternative to the activity which reduces adverse consequences on water quality and classified or existing uses of waters of the State.
- (C) The proposed activity adversely impacts waters containing State or federally recognized threatened or endangered species.
- (D) The proposed activity adversely impacts a special or unique aquatic habitat, such as National or State Wild and Scenic Rivers and/or State Outstanding Resource Waters.
- (E) The proposed activity in conjunction with other activities may result in adverse cumulative impacts.
- (F) Nonpoint source/storm water management practices necessary to protect water quality have not been proposed.
- (G) Denial of wastewater permits and/or approvals by the State with regard to the proposed activities.
- (H) The proposed activity results in significant environmental impacts which may adversely impact water quality.

MDEQ also certifies that there are no limitations under Section 302 nor standards under Sections 306 and 307 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act which are applicable to the applicant's above-described activity.

This certification is valid for the project as proposed. Any deviations without proper modifications and/or approvals may result in a violation of the 401 Water Quality Certification. If you have any questions, please contact Carrie Barefoot.

Sincerely,



Becky Simonson
Chief, Environmental Permits Division

cc: Greg Christodoulou, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District
Willa Brantley, Mississippi Department of Marine Resources
Jamie Becker, Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4
Lisa Morrison, Neel-Schaffer, Inc.