

February 12, 2016

Bullseye Glass Company voluntarily suspends hexavalent chromium use pending further data provided by Oregon DEQ

Company officials express confusion over bizarre actions by DEQ

In response to a personal request from Oregon DEQ Director Dick Pedersen, Bullseye Glass Company suspends the use of hexavalent chromium, an industry standard material lawful to use under the company's existing air quality discharge permit and DEQ's own regulations.

Company officials expressed confusion over the latest in a series of events undertaken by DEQ this week. According to company co-founder Dan Schwoerer, Director Pederson called a Bullseye employee at around 1:30pm on February 11th with a personal request that the company stop using chromium, an essential element in artisanal glass-making. Pederson made this request despite DEQ's inability to provide any direct evidence that Bullseye was a significant source of chromium. In fact, DEQ's own monitoring data from October 2015 showed peak levels of chromium on days when Bullseye's factory was idle.

The company has asked DEQ for information on the human health, scientific or legal basis of its request, which came less than 24 hours prior to the release of an Oregonian editorial critical of DEQ. As recently as February 10th, DEQ assured both Bullseye and the public that the company operates in compliance with its air quality discharge permit and DEQ's own regulations. Bullseye has regularly reported its use of chromium, as well as other industry standard materials, to state regulators for more than 20 years.

Company co-founder Dan Schwoerer said, "Bullseye Glass has been a conscientious member of SE Portland and of the broader artisan glass community for more than 40 years. We not only work here, more than half of our employees also live and have raised their families here. We and OSHA regularly monitor conditions within our facilities to protect our employees. We have a great track record for safety. We are committed to doing the right thing. We are concerned that DEQ's frantic actions could put us out of business and cause 140 people to lose their jobs."

DEQ now says it has been acutely aware of this issue for many years, but has not informed the public of any potential health risks, or alerted producers like Bullseye of any need to modify their operations until today. The company is committed to continuing to working with DEQ to resolve this situation.