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Attorneys for Third-Party Defendant
Town of Westfield

New Jersey Department of Environmental
Protection, *et al*,

Plaintiffs,

v.

Occidental Chemical Corporation, *et al*,

Defendants,

and

Occidental Chemical
Corporation, *et al*,

Third-Party Plaintiffs,

v.

Bayonne Municipal Utilities Authority, *et al*,

Third-Party Defendants.

X

: SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY
: LAW DIVISION - ESSEX COUNTY

:

: DOCKET NO. ESX-L-9868-05

:

: Civil Action

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: **TOWN OF WESTFIELD'S ANSWER
: TO DEFENDANTS MAXUS ENERGY
: CORPORATION'S AND TIERRA
: SOLUTIONS, INC.'S THIRD PARTY
: COMPLAINT "A"**

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Third-Party Defendant, the Town of Westfield, with its principal address at 425 East Broad Street, Westfield, New Jersey, by way of Answer to the Third-Party Complaint "A" brought by Defendants Maxus Energy Corporation and Tierra Solutions, Inc., says:

ANSWER

1. The Town of Westfield admits it is a public body and a municipality of the State of New Jersey and a member of the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority. All other allegations against the Town of Westfield are denied. The Town of Westfield is without sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1 through 1147, denies the allegations, and leaves Third-Party Plaintiffs to their proofs at time of trial.

WHEREFORE, the Town of Westfield demands judgment dismissing the Third-Party Complaint, awarding attorney's fees and costs of suit, and such other relief as the Court may deem just and equitable.

FIRST COUNT

**(New Jersey Spill Compensation and Control Act,
N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11f.a.(2)(a))**

2. The Town of Westfield repeats and re-alleges its answers contained in paragraph 1 as if set forth at length herein.

3. The Town of Westfield is without sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1148-1158, denies the allegations, and leaves Third-Party Plaintiffs to their proofs at time of trial.

WHEREFORE, the Town of Westfield demands judgment dismissing the Third-Party Complaint, awarding of attorney fees and costs of suit, and such other relief as the Court may deem just and equitable.

SECOND COUNT

(Statutory Contribution)

4. The Town of Westfield repeats and re-alleges its answers contained in paragraphs 1-3 as if set forth at length herein.

5. The Town of Westfield is without sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1159-1160, denies the allegations, and leaves Third-Party Plaintiffs to their proofs at time of trial.

WHEREFORE, the Town of Westfield demands judgment dismissing the Third-Party Complaint, awarding attorney's fees and costs of suit, and such other relief as the Court may deem just and equitable.

THIRD COUNT

**(Enforcement of N.J.S.A. 58:14-7 and
N.J.S.A. 58:14-8 and Environmental Rights Act Claim)**

6. The Town of Westfield repeats and re-alleges its answers contained in paragraphs 1-5 as if set forth at length herein.

7. The Town of Westfield is without sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1161-1186, denies the allegations, and leaves Third-Party Plaintiffs to their proofs at time of trial.

WHEREFORE, the Town of Westfield demands judgment dismissing the Third-Party Complaint, awarding attorney's fees and costs of suit, and such other relief as the Court may deem just and equitable.

FOURTH COUNT

(Nuisance)

8. The Town of Westfield repeats and re-alleges its answers contained in paragraphs 1-7 as if set forth at length herein.

9. The Town of Westfield is without sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1187-1195, denies the allegations, and leaves Third-Party Plaintiffs to their proofs at time of trial.

WHEREFORE, the Town of Westfield demands judgment dismissing the Third-Party Complaint, awarding attorney's fees and costs of suit, and such other relief as the Court may deem just and equitable.

FIFTH COUNT

(Breach of the Public Trust)

10. The Town of Westfield repeats and re-alleges its answers contained in paragraphs 1-9 as if set forth at length herein.

11. The Town of Westfield is without sufficient knowledge or information to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained in paragraphs 1196-1229, denies the allegations, and leaves Third-Party Plaintiffs to their proofs at time of trial.

WHEREFORE, the Town of Westfield demands judgment dismissing the Third-Party Complaint, awarding attorney's fees and costs of suit, and such other relief as the Court may deem just and equitable.

DEFENSES

1. The Third Party Complaint "A" fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.
2. The Third Party Complaint "A" must be dismissed for failure to join necessary and indispensable parties.
3. The Town of Westfield is not liable pursuant to the New Jersey Tort Claims Act, N.J.S.A. 59:1-1 to 12.3.
4. Third-Party Plaintiffs have failed to provide notice in accordance with N.J.S.A. 59:8-1 et seq.
5. Third-Party Plaintiffs lack standing.
6. Third-Party Plaintiffs have failed to exhaust administrative remedies.
7. Any wrongful conduct alleged in the Third-Party Complaint "A" resulted from and was proximately caused by the conduct of persons other than the Town of Westfield or by the conduct of persons over whom the Town of Westfield had no control, or by the superseding intervention, criminal, illegal or tortuous acts of others outside the control of the Town of Westfield.
8. Without admitting any liability, if it is determined that the Town of Westfield engaged in any of the activities alleged in the Third Party Complaint "A", such activities were *de minimis*.
9. Any damages were caused by an Act of God.
10. The claims asserted in the Third Party Complaint "A" are barred, in whole or in part, by the applicable statutes of limitations.
11. Plaintiffs' and Defendants/Third-Party Plaintiffs' costs incurred or to be incurred at the site are unreasonable, duplicative, not cost effective, and not consistent with the National Contingency Plan.
12. To the extent that the Town of Westfield is found liable in this matter, joint and several liability is inappropriate because there are distinct harms or a reasonable basis for apportionment of the harm suffered.

13. At all times relevant, the Town of Westfield complied with all applicable laws, regulations or standards and government approvals.

14. Plaintiffs and Defendants/Third-Party Plaintiffs failed to provide notice to the Town of Westfield that it was considered a potentially responsible party prior to undertaking numerous response actions relating to the site, which has precluded the Town of Westfield from commenting upon or participation in the selection of the remedial action at the site. This has resulted in a deprivation of the Town of Westfield's substantive and procedural due process rights under the Federal and State Constitutions.

15. Plaintiffs' and Defendants/Third-Party Plaintiffs' Complaints include costs not yet expended. The New Jersey Spill Compensation and Control Act ("Spill Act"), N.J.S.A. 58:10-23.11 et seq., does not authorize Plaintiffs and/or Third Party Plaintiffs to recover future costs. Therefore, any claims are premature and not yet ripe for adjudication.

16. The Third-Party Complaint "A" is an unauthorized retroactive application of the Spill Act and other applicable case law.

17. The Town of Westfield has at all times acted in good faith.

18. To the extent that this action is brought pursuant to the Spill Act, the Town of Westfield is not liable because any release or threat of release of any hazardous substance was an omission of a third party other than an employee or agent of the Town of Westfield. The Town of Westfield exercised due care with respect to any such alleged hazardous substance, in light of all relevant facts and circumstances. The Town of Westfield took precautions against foreseeable acts or omissions of any such third party and the consequences that could foreseeably result from such acts or omissions. Consequently, the Town of Westfield is not liable under the Spill Act.

19. Plaintiffs' and Defendants/Third Party Plaintiffs' claims for relief are barred by waiver, estoppel and/or laches.

20. In the event Plaintiff's and/or Defendants/Third Party Plaintiffs' claims are not barred by their own conduct, then any recovery by these parties should be reduced in the proportion that such parties' acts or omissions bear to the acts or omissions that caused the alleged injuries or damages.

21. Plaintiffs and Defendants/Third Party Plaintiffs have failed to comply with the necessary conditions precedent for the maintenance of a claim under the Spill Act.

22. The Town of Westfield is not a "responsible party" under the Spill Act.

23. Certain of the costs incurred or to be incurred by the Plaintiffs and/or Defendants/Third Party Plaintiffs in connection with the site are not "response costs", recoverable from the Town of Westfield, within the meaning of section 101 (23), (24) and (25) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C 9601 (23), (24) and (25), as applied to the Spill Act.

24. Certain of the actions taken to date by Plaintiffs and/or Third Party Plaintiffs for which Third Party Plaintiffs are making a claim against the Town of Westfield were not consistent with the National Contingency Plan because, among other things, the Town of Westfield was not provided with notice or an opportunity to comment.

25. The Town of Westfield exercised reasonable care under all the circumstances herein. Consequently, it is not liable to Plaintiffs or Defendants/Third Party Plaintiffs under the common law or any statutory theory of recovery averred herein.

26. The claims for relief are time barred by the terms of the Spill Act.

27. Third Party Plaintiffs' claims against the Town of Westfield are barred, in whole or in part, by Section 107(b)(3) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9607(b)(3) because any releases, or threats of releases of hazardous substances, including those allegedly attributable to the Town of Westfield, an allegation the Town of Westfield denies, were caused by the acts or omissions of third parties other than the Town of Westfield's employees or agents, or other than one with whom the Town of Westfield had a direct or indirect contractual relationship, and the Town of Westfield exercised due care with respect to the alleged hazardous substances taking into consideration the characteristics thereof, in light of all the relevant facts and circumstances, and took precautions against foreseeable acts or omissions of any such third party and the consequences that could foreseeably result from such act or omissions.

28. Third Party Plaintiffs have not paid more than their fair share of any damages, costs or other relief sought by the Plaintiffs, New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and the Administrator of the New Jersey Spill Compensation Fund, and are, therefore, not entitled to contribution from the Town of Westfield.

29. Third-Party Plaintiffs' claims for indemnification are barred because any alleged liability of the Town of Westfield, liability the Town of Westfield denies, would be secondary, indirect, passive, precarious, constructive, technical and/or imputed, and the liability of all or some of the Defendants/Third-Party Plaintiffs are direct, active and primary.

30. Third-Party Plaintiffs are not entitled to recover attorney's fees or costs, or fees of litigation.

31. Third Party Plaintiffs are not entitled to recovery for any alleged unjust enrichment as there exists an adequate remedy at law to redress Third-Party Plaintiffs' claims.

32. Third-Party Plaintiffs' claims are barred by the statutory defenses to liability provided by the Spill Act.

33. Third-Party Plaintiffs' claims are barred to the extent they seek relief for conduct occurring, or damages incurred, before the effective date of the Spill Act.

34. Third-Party Plaintiffs' claims are barred to the extent they seek recovery for any punitive damages as such claims are barred by public policy and applicable laws.

35. To the extent that Third-Party Plaintiffs' claims against the Town of Westfield are subject to contribution or any reduction or offset from other parties, any damages recovered against the Town of Westfield shall be reduced accordingly.

36. The Town of Westfield hereby asserts and adopts all other defenses which have been or will be asserted at any time by any other party in this action, to the extent said defenses are applicable to the Town of Westfield.

37. The Town of Westfield reserves the right to assert additional defenses that may be uncovered during the course of this action.

COUNTERCLAIMS AND CROSSCLAIMS

In accordance with Case Management Order V, the Town of Westfield is not asserting any counter claims or cross claims at this time and reserves its rights to do so as specified by the Court's Order.

DESIGNATION OF TRIAL COUNSEL

In accordance with R. 4:25-4, Francis J. Borin and Daren R. Eppley are designated as trial counsel.

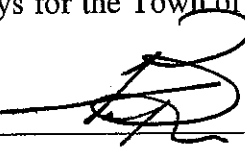
CERTIFICATION PURSUANT TO R. 4:5-1

It is hereby certified in accordance with R. 4:5-1 that the specific matter in controversy is not, to my knowledge, the subject of any action pending in any Court, nor of any pending arbitration proceeding. Other than the above referenced actions, there are no other actions or arbitration proceedings in existence or contemplated at this time; and I know of no other party who should be joined in this action. I hereby certify that these statements made by me are true

and that I am aware that if any of these statements is willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

DeCotiis, FitzPatrick, Cole & Wisler, LLP
Attorneys for the Town of Westfield,

Dated: October 16, 2009

By: 
FRANCIS J. BORIN

FILING CERTIFICATION

I certify that the original and copy of the within Answer and Separate Defenses have been sent by regular mail for filing to the Clerk of the Superior Court of New Jersey, Law Division, Essex County, at the Veterans Courthouse, 50 W. Market Street, Newark, NJ 07102, and a copy of the same has been sent *via* regular mail this date to Third-Party Plaintiffs' attorneys as follows:

William L. Warren, Esq.
Drinker, Biddle & Reath, LLP
105 College Road East, Suite 300
Princeton, NJ 08542-0627

Thomas E. Starnes, Esq.
Andrews Kurth, LLP
1350 I Street NW - Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

I certify that a copy of said document has been posted on the electronic platform provided by Defendants. (<http://njdepvocc.sfile.com/>)



DAREN R. EPPLEY

Dated:

10/16/09