$2.25M Penalty For MO Pharmaceuticals Plant

Jim Salter, Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Teva Pharmaceuticals USA Inc. will pay a $2.25 million penalty for violations that included allowing fluorescent green discharge into a river at its plant in northeast Missouri, state and federal officials said Thursday.

Teva makes antibiotics at a plant outside of Mexico, Mo., about 120 miles northwest of St. Louis. Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster said the green discharge flowed into the Salt River from a wastewater treatment plant in 2008. Koster's office said it discolored the river for 22 miles, all the way to Mark Twain Lake. The discharge was traced to the Teva facility.

"Missourians have a right to expect local businesses to comply with environmental laws designed to protect the state's valuable water resources," Koster said.

Nanci Gonder, a spokeswoman for Koster, said there were no known human or wildlife illnesses resulting from the discharge.

The EPA cited air pollution, water pollution and wastewater violations, some of which were uncovered by inspections dating to 2007, even before the discharge was found in Salt River.

"With numerous violations over a period of years, Teva's actions resulted in significant environmental damage to the air and water," said EPA Region 7 Administrator Karl Brooks. "The penalty and injunctive relief required by this agreement send a strong message to Teva and others that businesses must comply with environmental laws."

Teva said in a statement that the issues leading to the penalty "have been addressed and the facility is operating in compliance with all relevant environmental laws. Additionally, the site continues to take proactive steps to reduce its environmental footprint."

The EPA said that in addition to the penalty, Teva must pay more than $2.5 million for anti-pollution upgrades at the plant. The company also will pay the state $150,000 for things such as investigation costs and damage to natural resources, Koster's office said.

Teva Pharmaceuticals USA is a division of Teva Industries Ltd., based in Israel. Its website says it employs 46,000 people in 60 countries, including 9,000 in the U.S.

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