



State of Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

STREET ADDRESS:

Lazarus Government Center
50 W. Town St., Suite 700
Columbus, Ohio 43215

TELE: (614) 644-3020 FAX: (614) 644-3184
www.epa.state.oh.us

MAILING ADDRESS:

P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, OH 43216-1049

June 15, 2007

Pat Royse, Editor
Celina Daily Standard
123 E. Market Street
PO Box 140
Celina, OH 45822-0140

Dear Editor:

I am responding to the June 8, 2007, story "Local official: State permit process delays ethanol plant." Ohio EPA works diligently to process permits in a timely manner and often does so in less time than the law allows. Rather than thinking about environmental permitting as a holdup, it should be considered an integral part of business development planning. One of the best ways to ensure timeliness is to make sure companies understand environmental requirements early in the planning phase.

Ohio EPA staff met with Mercer Energy officials in July and November last year to discuss environmental permit requirements and timeframes. We advised them to submit all applications as early as possible, since it can take about six months to process multiple permit applications.

Mercer Energy submitted an air permit application on January 23, 2007. We did not receive the wastewater discharge permit application until March 13, 2007. Ohio EPA will soon be ready to issue both permits in draft form to collect public comments.

Ohio EPA supports the development of alternative energies, so we have taken steps to simplify and speed the permitting process for build ethanol plants. We're doing more to educate potential applicants about the process. We've assigned someone to help ethanol plant representatives with permitting issues. And we created a permitting guidebook and a "model" permit for our permit writers and applicants.

Ohio EPA's primary duty is to carefully consider all applications and establish standards that protect public health and the environment. If complete and timely applications are filed, the environmental permitting process should not delay business development.

Sincerely,

Chris Korleski
Director

Ted Strickland, Governor
Lee Fisher, Lieutenant Governor
Chris Korleski, Director