

Boise Cascade agrees to slash

plant emissions by 95 percent

By Jerry Seper
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Wood-products giant Boise Cascade Corp. yesterday agreed to reduce up to 95 percent of the harmful emissions from eight plants, the Justice Department and the Environmental Protection Agency announced yesterday.

The plywood and particleboard plants are in Oregon, Washington, Louisiana and Idaho.

A consent decree filed yesterday in U.S. District Court in Portland, Ore., requires Boise Cascade to in-

human health and the environment in the communities near its plants," said Assistant Attorney General Tom Sansonetti, who heads the department's Environment and Natural Resources Division.

The government said Boise Cascade modified and expanded its panel-board operations over the past two decades without installing proper air pollution control equipment to reduce harmful emissions as required under provisions of the federal Clean Air Act and state rules.

Justice Department officials said

state-of-the-art air pollution control equipment at an estimated cost of \$15 million over the next three years at its Medford and Elgin, Ore., operations, and the Florien and Oakdale plants in Louisiana.

In addition, the company must select one of three pollution control options to reduce volatile organic compound emissions from its particleboard facility in Island City, Ore.

The company also will pay \$4.35 million in civil penalties and has agreed to spend another \$2.9 million in supplemental controls to reduce emissions at the Yakima and Kettle

Falls, Wash., plants, and to control certain units at the Medford, Ore., plywood facility. Louisiana joined in the settlement and will receive a \$250,000 share in the penalties.

Justice Department officials said the settlement is expected to reduce emissions by an estimated 2,166 tons per year. The emissions are linked with the formation of ground-level ozone, or smog, and are known to contribute to respiratory illnesses, especially in children and the elderly.

"Boise Cascade's willingness to settle the case will help improve

to improve," said Sylvia Lowrance, acting EPA assistant administrator for enforcement and compliance assurance.

The settlement comes two years after the EPA issued its first notice of violation to Boise Cascade in March 2000. Yesterday's agreement is the fifth effort by EPA and the states to ensure the wood-products industry complies with major Clean Air Act permitting requirements.

The government previously reached settlements with Louisiana-Pacific, Georgia Pacific, Weyerhaeuser and Willamette Industries.

Boise Cascade is the fifth case against a major wood-products producer to be settled as part of EPA's wood-products initiative, which started in the late 1980s.

The Clean Air Act new-source review program is designed to prevent deterioration of the nation's air quality, requiring newly constructed or modified sources of air pollution, such as electric utilities and wood-products factories, to obtain permits and install air pollution control equipment to reduce emissions before construction or modification.

"Our nation's air quality continues