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## **NORTH CAROLINA CORPORATE HOG FARM AND PRESIDENT SENTENCED TO PAY \$1.5 MILLION FOR VIOLATING THE CLEAN WATER ACT**

WASHINGTON – Today, Freedman Farms Inc., was sentenced in federal court to five years probation and ordered to pay \$1.5 million in fines, restitution, and community service payments for violating the Clean Water Act when they discharged hog waste into a stream that leads to the Waccamaw River, announced the Department of Justice’s Environment and Natural Resources Division and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina.

William B. Freedman, president of Freedman Farms, was sentenced to six months in prison to be followed by six months of home confinement.

Freedman Farms was sentenced to pay a \$500,000 criminal fine, and \$925,000 in restitution. The judge will hold a status conference in 30 days to determine the scope of restitution to compensate for or repair lost or injured resources that resulted from these violations. In addition, a community service payment of \$75,000 will be paid directly to the Southern Environmental Enforcement Network (SEEN), one of four U.S. regional environmental enforcement associations established to train environmental enforcement professionals. SEEN is to use the funds for funding environmental projects designed to preserve and restore waters in the Eastern District of North Carolina.

Freedman Farms also is required to implement a comprehensive environmental compliance program and institute an annual training program.

“William Freedman and Freedman Farms will be held accountable for polluting waterways and wetlands in Columbus County and the Waccamaw River watershed,” said Ignacia S. Moreno, Assistant Attorney General for the Environment and Natural Resources Division of the Department of Justice. “Owners and operators of concentrated animal feeding operations must comply with the nation’s Clean Water Act for the protection of America’s streams, wetlands, and rivers.”

“It is vital to the well-being of our residents to protect our natural resources, including the numerous streams and marshes found in the Eastern part of North Carolina,” said Thomas G. Walker, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina. “This prosecution reflects our ongoing efforts to protect the environment and resources that we all cherish.”

“Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), like Freedman Farms, are an EPA enforcement priority because manure, if not properly controlled, can contaminate both surface waters and ground waters that may be used as drinking water sources and harm fish and other aquatic species,” said Maureen O’Mara, Special Agent-in-Charge of EPA’s criminal enforcement office in Atlanta. “In this case, hog wastes flowed through sensitive wetlands, posing a risk to water and wildlife. Today’s sentences send a clear message to CAFO’s and their owners that if you disregard the law, you will be prosecuted.”

According to evidence presented in court, Freedman Farms discharged hog waste into Browder’s Branch, a tributary to the Waccamaw River that flows through the White Marsh, a large wetlands complex. Freedman Farms, located in Columbus County, N.C., is in the business of raising hogs for market, and this particular farm had some 4,800 hogs. The hog waste was supposed to be directed to two lagoons for treatment and disposal. In December 2007, hog waste was discharged from Freedman Farms directly into Browder’s Branch.

The Clean Water Act is a federal law that makes it illegal to knowingly or negligently discharge a pollutant into a water of the United States.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Criminal Investigation Division and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, with assistance from the EPA Science and Ecosystem Support Division. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney J. Gaston B. Williams of the Eastern District of North Carolina and Trial Attorney Mary Dee Carraway of the Environmental Crimes Section of the Justice Department’s Environment and Natural Resources Division.

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