

Background Information

E85, Inc., proposes to install an ethanol plant to produce 115.8 million gallons per year of fuel grade ethanol. In order to build the plant, an air quality Permit to Install must be obtained from the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Air Quality Division.

The proposed plant would be located near Parmenter and Escott Roads, in Corunna, Michigan. In addition to ethanol, the plant would also produce distillers dried grains and solubles (DDGS) and wet distillers grains and solubles (WDGS), marketable livestock feed supplements.

The proposed plant includes the following: equipment for receiving corn by truck and rail; corn storage and milling; fermentation; ethanol distillation and dehydration; ethanol and gasoline denaturant storage tanks; truck and railcar loading of ethanol; separation of distillers grains from process water; evaporation of process water to produce syrup, which is mixed with the distillers grains to produce WDGS; dryers to produce DDGS from WDGS; storage and handling of DDGS and WDGS; a non-contact cooling tower; an anaerobic treatment module to convert organic material in process wastewater to fuel gas (mostly methane); two natural gas fired boilers to produce process steam; and a diesel powered emergency generator.

E85 proposes to control emissions from the plant with three scrubbers; ten fabric filter dust collectors; two thermal oxidizers integrated with the dryers; four condensers; two flares; and internal floating roofs on the five ethanol and gasoline denaturant storage tanks.

Common Concerns About Ethanol Plants

Health impacts of air emissions on people in the area, including students in the schools, nursing home residents, and people with asthma, etc. The AQD reviewed the emissions from the proposed plant and, using computer modeling, compared the emissions to the state and federal health based standards. The review showed the emissions are not expected to cause harm to anyone, including children, the elderly, and people with illnesses. The health based standards are designed to protect the most vulnerable members of society.

The facility is going to generate odors. Ethanol plants have the potential to generate odors, but the AQD does not expect the proposed plant to cause odors that would interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life and property. The emission controls and odor management plan required by the proposed permit are expected to minimize odors from the facility.

Proposed groundwater usage: The groundwater usage rate of the proposed facility is approximately 1.7 million gallons per day. This is below the 2 million gallons per day level for which a DEQ permit would be required, but the facility would have to report water usage to the DEQ. The DEQ Water Bureau, not the AQD, has jurisdiction over groundwater withdrawals.

Will the facility meet its emission limits? The proposed permit requires emission controls to be operated properly at all times. Emissions from the facility would be verified by testing. Specialized AQD staff would review and approve the test methods and results.

What oversight of the facility will there be? AQD will conduct periodic inspections of the facility to determine if E85, Inc. is complying with the permit. In addition, AQD staff respond to citizen complaints regarding air related issues.