



RHODE ISLAND

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

235 Promenade Street, Room 425
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

April 23, 2026

Gregory A. Mancini, President
North Kingstown Town Council
100 Fairway Drive
North Kingstown, RI 02852

Re: Asphalt Odor Complaints in North Kingstown

Dear Council President Mancini,

Thank you for contacting the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) regarding our response to the complaints of strong asphalt odors reportedly emanating from the West Davisville area of the Quonset Business Park (QBP). Beginning in late December 2025, DEM began receiving complaints from the public regarding petroleum and asphalt-like odors that complainants attributed to the Bitumar USA, Inc. (Bitumar) facility located at 275 Compass Circle in QBP. Distinguishing these complaints from similar ones relating to the nearby T. Miozzi asphalt plant has proven challenging; however, to date, DEM has received at least 80 complaints specifically identifying Bitumar as the source.

During the winter months, the Bitumar facility was non-operational due to seasonal conditions and low demand. Consequently, DEM inspectors detected no odors between December and early April. However, once Bitumar resumed operations this spring, a property-line inspection on March 30, 2026, identified mild asphalt odors that did not extend into the adjacent neighborhood. Following discussions with Bitumar's Regional Manager, DEM and Bitumar's environmental consultant attended a transfer demonstration on April 16, 2026. While inspectors noted a mild odor during the two-hour transfer process, subsequent patrols of the downwind neighborhood yielded no detectable odors. While DEM has not yet confirmed "objectionable" odors beyond the property line, we recognize that weather conditions—particularly between midnight and dawn—significantly impact odor migration and intensity. Bitumar has expressed a desire to be a good neighbor and is currently exploring options for reducing odors generated during the transfer process.


Given the serious and voluminous concerns shared with DEM, staff from DEM's Office of Air Resources (OAR) conducted a full compliance evaluation inspection of the Bitumar facility. As you are aware, Bitumar is a relatively new operation in the QBP that receives shipments of a liquid asphalt product via railcar for transfer to tanker trucks and distribution throughout the State. To ensure that the facility was operating at the time of the inspection, OAR staff contacted the company in advance to make the necessary arrangements. During the April 16th inspection Bitumar arranged to have a shipment of liquid asphalt arrive so that OAR personnel could observe the transfer process.

While I cannot discuss the specifics of the inspection because it is currently under review, I can share the actions taken by DEM personnel. OAR staff conducted a full evaluation of the industrial processes underway at the time of the inspection. This evaluation included the use of a Forward Looking Infrared Camera (FLIR) which is capable of detecting emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), an Aeroqual Ranger to monitor the concentration of hydrogen sulfide gas and a Multi-Rae sensor that monitors the concentration of combustible gases, oxygen levels and various other toxic gases. OAR is in the process of reviewing the results of the inspection and the data collected thus far.

The outcome of these investigations will dictate DEM's next actions which may range from a finding of noncompliance with applicable federal and/or state regulations, to a determination that the company is operating in compliance at this time. We are committed to working with the Town, concerned members of the public, Quonset Development Corporation, and Bitumar to find a resolution to the ongoing situation. I will share the results of DEM's investigation with all interested parties once it concludes.

Please contact Christina Hoefsmit, OC&I's Administrator for inquiries regarding odor complaints at Christina.Hoefsmit@dem.ri.gov or by phone at (401) 537-4448, and Laurie Grandchamp, OAR's Administrator for inquiries relating to air pollution permitting requirements at Laurie.Grandchamp@dem.ri.gov or by phone at (401) 537-4378.

Sincerely,



Terrence Gray, P.E.
Director

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