State environmental regulators declared a plant in the heart of Brunswick to be in violation of Georgia air quality laws for the second time in a little more than a year.

The state Environmental Protection Division issued an enforcement order against Pinova in October 2016 for noncompliance with its permit and further “testing, monitoring and reporting requirements,” hitting the company with a $9,000 fine. Not long after, the company changed ownership, but the EPD lodged another enforcement order in December 2017, citing a laundry list of violations and lodging a $30,000 fine.

“The (notice of violation) came out, and from our point of view, that’s a serious thing,” said Corey Schneider, president of DRT America, the company that took over Pinova in December 2016. “We took it very seriously, we’re very concerned about it, we convened meetings to discuss it, to decide what are the right steps."
“The important thing that I think we want to convey is that all the underlying violations that happened occurred prior to us — DRT America — buying the company. So, they were historical. There were some violations that were due to late quarterly reports after we purchased the company, but those were violations that we were not able to remedy, because of our timing of our entry to owning the business.”

Molly Matthews, DRT America vice president of operations, said DRT reached an agreement with EPD at the beginning of December, so corrective action was already well underway before the enforcement order became public Dec. 18.

“Just the fact that we’ve reached it in such of a kind of friendly way — they haven’t really slammed us, they put out a big notice of violation, but they didn’t hammer us — indicates that they recognize too the violations were important, but not so terribly important, and also that we’re taking steps to correct,” Schneider said.

Schneider said steps taken include staffing up to replace employees who moved on with the prior ownership, replacing one staff member who proved ineffectual, and bringing in new consultants to help with reporting and to make sure that reporting is accurate.

Daniel Parshley of the Glynn Environmental Coalition, which works with government regulators at local Superfund sites, said in December that GEC is aware of turnover and upgrades at the facility, and is reviewing the current situation.

“Failure to adhere to good operational practices, file timely permit applications and keep appropriate records does not mean an air release took place,” Parshley said. “But failing to do proper monitoring means they would not know if a release took place, either.”

EPD VIOLATIONS - Georgia Air Quality Act violations by Pinova, according to state Environmental Protection Division enforcement order EPD-AQC-6886

Failure to:
• maintain records
• furnish to the Division requested info
• provide notification of ownership change
• submit updated permit application
• submit performance test results
• conduct fuel analysis
• demonstrate continuous compliance with chlorine, mercury and TSM limits
• submit the NOCS
• develop site-specific monitoring plan
• submit first semiannual compliance report
• continuously monitor and record applicable parameter values
• operating No. 9 boiler without good operational practices
• conduct an annual tune-up on No. 9 and 10 Boilers
• submit fourth quarter 2016 report and 2016 ACC
• identify all reportable periods of excess emissions, exceedances and/or excursions
• provide all necessary information
• accurately certify compliance status
• continuously monitor parameters
• maintain system by which to take and record corrective actions to comply with excursions at the Crown Extractor Wood Inlet Vent and Crown Head Space
• install, calibrate and operate a flow indicator
• ensure monitoring instrument for detecting leaks is calibrated, document and/or conduct visual inspections
• develop a system to ensure that after a pressure release, pressure relief devices are returned to a condition indicated by an instrument reading
• repair leaking components, document and/or conduct inspections of the Vinsol baghouse
• annual training for visible emissions
• maintain a log of corrective actions
• document maintenance plan
• continuously monitor various parameters