

INITIAL DECISION RELEASE NO. 1266  
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDING  
FILE NO. 3-18095

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Before the  
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20549

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In the Matter of	:	
	:	INITIAL DECISION
AV THERAPEUTICS, INC.,	:	MAKING FINDINGS AND
BALQON CORPORATION,	:	REVOKING REGISTRATIONS
EMPRESS MINING INC. (f/k/a PENOLA, INC.), and	:	BY DEFAULT
PASSPORT POTASH, INC.	:	October 24, 2018

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APPEARANCE: David S. Frye for the Division of Enforcement,  
Securities and Exchange Commission

BEFORE: Carol Fox Foelak, Administrative Law Judge

### SUMMARY

This Initial Decision revokes the registrations of the registered securities of Balqon Corporation, Empress Mining Inc. (f/k/a Penola, Inc.), and Passport Potash, Inc. (collectively, Respondents).<sup>1</sup> The revocations are based on Respondents' repeated failure to file required periodic reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission (Commission).

### I. BACKGROUND

The Securities and Exchange Commission instituted this proceeding with an Order Instituting Proceedings (OIP), pursuant to Section 12(j) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 on August 2, 2017. Each Respondent's Answer was due within ten days of service of the OIP on it. *See* OIP at 3; 17 C.F.R. § 201.220(b). Each Respondent was served with the OIP by September 20, 2017, by USPS Express Mail delivery or attempted delivery at "the most recent address shown on [its] most recent filing with the Commission." 17 C.F.R. § 201.141(a)(2)(ii), (iv). Each Respondent failed to file an Answer. On October 17, 2017, an Initial Decision of Default revoked the registration of the registered securities of the three remaining respondents, Balqon Corporation, Empress Mining Inc. (f/k/a Penola, Inc.), and Passport Potash, Inc. *AV Therapeutics, Inc.*, Initial Decision Release No. 1192, 2017 SEC LEXIS 3314 (A.L.J.).

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<sup>1</sup> The proceeding ended on August 10, 2017, as to AV Therapeutics, Inc., which settled. *AV Therapeutics, Inc.*, Exchange Act Release No. 81378, 2017 SEC LEXIS 2461 (Aug. 10, 2017).

On August 22, 2018, in light of *Lucia v. SEC*, 138 S. Ct. 2044 (2018), the Commission ordered a new hearing in each pending proceeding, including this one, before an administrative law judge who had not previously participated in the proceeding, unless the parties expressly agreed to alternative procedures, including agreeing that the proceeding remain with the previous presiding administrative law judge. *Pending Admin. Proc.*, Securities Act of 1933 Release No. 10536, 2018 SEC LEXIS 2058, at \*2-3. Accordingly, the proceeding was reassigned to the undersigned. *Pending Admin. Proc.*, Admin. Proc. Rulings Release No. 5955, 2018 SEC LEXIS 2264 (C.A.L.J. Sept. 12, 2018).

In view of the reassignment of the proceeding, Respondents were afforded a new opportunity to file Answers, which were due by October 5, 2018. *AV Therapeutics, Inc.*, Admin. Proc. Rulings Release No. 6037, 2018 SEC LEXIS 2498, at \*3 (A.L.J. Sept. 20, 2018). None filed an Answer, and each was ordered to show cause by October 23, 2018, why it should not be deemed to be in default and the registration of its securities revoked. *AV Therapeutics, Inc.*, Admin. Proc. Rulings Release No. 6147, 2018 SEC LEXIS 2760 (A.L.J. Oct. 9, 2018). To date, none has filed an Answer to the OIP or responded to the order to show cause. Thus, Respondents have failed to answer or otherwise to defend the proceeding within the meaning of 17 C.F.R. § 201.155(a)(2). Accordingly, Respondents are in default, and the undersigned finds that the allegations in the OIP are true as to them. *See* OIP at 3; 17 C.F.R. §§ 201.155(a)(2), .220(f). Official notice has been taken of the Commission's public official records concerning Respondents, pursuant to 17 C.F.R. § 201.323.

## II. FINDINGS OF FACT

Balqon Corporation (BLQN) (CIK No. 1169440)<sup>2</sup> is a revoked Nevada corporation located in Harbor City, California, with a class of securities registered with the Commission pursuant to Exchange Act Section 12(g). BLQN is delinquent in its periodic filings with the Commission, having not filed any periodic reports since it filed a Form 10-Q for the period ended September 30, 2014, which reported a net loss of \$201,797 for the prior nine months. As of July 26, 2017, the common stock of BLQN was quoted on OTC Link, had six market makers, and was eligible for the "piggyback" exception of Exchange Act Rule 15c2-11(f)(3).

Empress Mining Inc. (f/k/a Penola, Inc.) (EMPC) (CIK No. 1524774) is a Nevada corporation located in West Preston, Victoria, Australia, with a class of securities registered with the Commission pursuant to Exchange Act Section 12(g). EMPC is delinquent in its periodic filings with the Commission, having not filed any periodic reports since it filed a Form 10-Q for the period ended November 30, 2014, which reported a net loss of \$14,745 for the prior nine months. As of July 26, 2017, the common stock of EMPC was quoted on OTC Link, had two market makers, and was eligible for the "piggyback" exception of Exchange Act Rule 15c2-11(f)(3).

Passport Potash, Inc. (PPRTF) (CIK No. 1508128) is a British Columbia corporation located in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, with a class of securities registered with the Commission pursuant to Exchange Act Section 12(g). PPRTF is delinquent in its periodic filings with the Commission, having not filed any periodic reports since it filed a Form 10-Q for the period ended

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<sup>2</sup> The short form of each Respondent's name is also its ticker symbol. The CIK number is a unique identifier for each corporation in the Commission's EDGAR database. The user can retrieve filings of a corporation by using its CIK number.

November 30, 2014, which reported a net loss of \$2,297,984 for the prior nine months. As of July 26, 2017, the common shares of PPRTF were quoted on OTC Link, had six market makers, and were eligible for the “piggyback” exception of Exchange Act Rule 15c2-11(f)(3).

### III. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

By failing to file required annual and quarterly reports, Respondents violated Exchange Act Section 13(a) and Rules 13a-1 and 13a-13.

### IV. SANCTION

Revocation of the registrations of the registered securities of Respondents will serve the public interest and the protection of investors, pursuant to Section 12(j) of the Exchange Act. Revocation will help ensure that the corporate shell is not later put to an illicit use involving publicly traded securities manipulated to the detriment of market participants. Further, revocation accords with Commission sanction considerations set forth in *Gateway International Holdings, Inc.*, Exchange Act Release No. 53907, 2006 SEC LEXIS 1288, at \*19-20 (May 31, 2006) (citing *Steadman v. SEC*, 603 F.2d 1126, 1139-40 (5th Cir. 1979), *aff'd on other grounds*, 450 U.S. 91 (1981)), and with the sanctions imposed in similar cases in which corporations violated Exchange Act Section 13(a) by failing to file required annual and quarterly reports. See *Cobalis Corp.*, Exchange Act Release No. 64813, 2011 SEC LEXIS 2313 (July 6, 2011), *recons. denied*, Exchange Act Release No. 65118, 2011 SEC LEXIS 2839 (Aug. 12, 2011); *Nature's Sunshine Prods., Inc.*, Exchange Act Release No. 59268, 2009 SEC LEXIS 81 (Jan. 21, 2009); *Impax Labs., Inc.*, Exchange Act Release No. 57864, 2008 SEC LEXIS 1197 (May 23, 2008); *America's Sports Voice, Inc.*, Exchange Act Release No. 55511, 2007 SEC LEXIS 1241 (Mar. 22, 2007), *recons. denied*, Exchange Act Release No. 55867, 2007 SEC LEXIS 1242 (June 6, 2007); *Eagletech Commc'ns, Inc.*, Exchange Act Release No. 54095, 2006 SEC LEXIS 1534 (July 5, 2006). Respondents' violations were recurrent, egregious, and deprived the investing public of current and accurate financial information on which to make informed decisions.

Failure to file periodic reports violates a crucial provision of the Exchange Act. The purpose of the periodic reporting requirements is to publicly disclose current, accurate financial information about an issuer so that investors may make informed decisions:

The reporting requirements of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 is the primary tool which Congress has fashioned for the protection of investors from negligent, careless, and deliberate misrepresentations in the sale of stock and securities. Congress has extended the reporting requirements even to companies which are “relatively unknown and insubstantial.”

*SEC v. Beisinger Indus. Corp.*, 552 F.2d 15, 18 (1st Cir. 1977) (quoting legislative history); *accord e-Smart Techs., Inc.*, Exchange Act Release No. 50514, 2004 SEC LEXIS 2361, at \*8-9 (Oct. 12, 2004). The Commission has warned that “many publicly traded companies that fail to file on a timely basis are ‘shell companies’ and, as such, attractive vehicles for fraudulent stock manipulation schemes.” *e-Smart Techs., Inc.*, 2004 SEC LEXIS 2361, at \*9 n.14.

## V. ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to Section 12(j) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, 15 U.S.C. § 78l(j):

the REGISTRATION of the registered securities of Balqon Corporation is REVOKED;

the REGISTRATION of the registered securities of Empress Mining Inc. (f/k/a Penola, Inc.), is REVOKED; and

the REGISTRATION of the registered securities of Passport Potash, Inc., is REVOKED.

This Initial Decision shall become effective in accordance with and subject to the provisions of Rule 360 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, 17 C.F.R. § 201.360. Pursuant to that Rule, a party may file a petition for review of this Initial Decision within twenty-one days after service of the Initial Decision. A party may also file a motion to correct a manifest error of fact within ten days of the Initial Decision, pursuant to Rule 111 of the Commission's Rules of Practice, 17 C.F.R. § 201.111. If a motion to correct a manifest error of fact is filed by a party, then a party shall have twenty-one days to file a petition for review from the date of the undersigned's order resolving such motion to correct a manifest error of fact. The Initial Decision will not become final until the Commission enters an order of finality. The Commission will enter an order of finality unless a party files a petition for review or a motion to correct a manifest error of fact or the Commission determines on its own initiative to review the Initial Decision as to a party. If any of these events occur, the Initial Decision shall not become final as to that party.<sup>3</sup>

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Carol Fox Foelak  
Administrative Law Judge

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<sup>3</sup> A respondent may also file a motion to set aside a default pursuant to 17 C.F.R. § 201.155(b). *See Alchemy Ventures, Inc.*, Exchange Act Release No. 70708, 2013 SEC LEXIS 3459, at \*13 & n.28 (Oct. 17, 2013); *see also David Mura*, Exchange Act Release No. 72080, 2014 SEC LEXIS 1530 (May 2, 2014).