



## **Vanocur Refractories Protects Its Patented “Big BLOCK” Technology By Filing A Patent-Infringement Complaint Against Fosbel Inc.**

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Vanocur Refractories (“Vanocur”), a worldwide leader in coke-oven refractory design, repair, and installation, has filed a patent-infringement lawsuit against Fosbel Inc. (“Fosbel”). The complaint, filed in the United States District Court for Western New York, alleges Fosbel is infringing on Vanocur’s patented “Big BLOCK” technology.

Vanocur will continue to protect its investment in researching, developing, and commercializing its “Big BLOCK” design by vigorously enforcing its intellectual property rights in the United States and worldwide. It is unfortunate that Vanocur’s success in the coke-oven industry has made it a target for copycat companies to infringe on Vanocur’s patented design for its own benefit. Please understand that Vanocur will not comment on the company’s legal strategy, but also know that Vanocur’s work is original, and we will vigorously defend against infringement of its patented design.

### **The Invention at Issue and Fosbel’s Alleged Infringement**

Vanocur has evidence demonstrating that Fosbel has been involved in the making, using, and selling, in the United States and elsewhere, of components that embody the inventions claimed in U.S. Patent Number 8,266,853, which was issued to Vanocur by the United States Patent and Trademark Office on September 18, 2012, and remains in full effect.

The patented invention at issue relates to Vanocur’s “Big BLOCK Solution” coke-oven design, which for almost two decades has supplied the coke and steel industry with a revolutionary oven design and repair system that reduces costs attributed to downtime, labor, and future-maintenance repairs, all while assuring quality and safety. Utilizing its patented technology, including its Modular Cast Block (“MCB”) technology, Vanocur is the worldwide leader in coke-oven refractory design, repair, and installation.

Prior to this alleged infringing scheme, Vanocur was the sole manufacturer of modules for the coke-oven industry for over 20 years. Customers have selected Vanocur because of the competitive advantage that its “Big BLOCK” technology has provided through its groundbreaking design and repair, which has been proven to cut costs, time, labor, and future-maintenance repairs. Vanocur believes that once Fosbel was armed with manufacturers in the United States who could recreate the components required to copy Vanocur’s “Big BLOCK”

design, Fosbel spearheaded the making, using, selling, and offering to sell Vanocur's patented design, which led to the need for this lawsuit.

The complaint alleges that prior to its infringing activities, Fosbel never produced refractory blocks in the United States, and instead it chose to utilize China. Vanocur believes Fosbel's level of experience was limited to using traditional silica bricks, and then suddenly it did a complete shift and started to produce large size cast monolithic thermally stable non-expanding blocks or modules so that it could compete with Vanocur in domestic coke-oven markets. This sudden shift in Fosbel's business model and coke-oven design caught the attention of Vanocur and led to further investigation regarding Fosbel's alleged infringing activities.

## **About Vanocur Refractories**

Vanocur is committed to bringing the coke industry the latest and most innovative solutions, and its commitment is evidenced by the continued investment in the research, development, and commercialization of breakthrough technologies designed to limit ongoing obstacles in the coke industry.

To combat the numerous potential failure points in corbels created using the conventional techniques and silica bricks, Vanocur dedicated years to developing a design that revolutionizes the construction quality, installation speed, and performance of corbel-coke ovens. Through constant research, experimentation, and persistence, Vanocur invented an extremely efficient and high-quality repair method and product. Vanocur's efforts yielded a reputation as an industry leader in design, repair, and installation of coke ovens. In fact, Vanocur has long been referred to as the "Big BLOCK" guys. Managed by coke-oven operators who understand the challenges in the industry, for over 40 years Vanocur has been investing in forward-focused, continuous improvement, and it has remained committed to pioneering excellence.

Vanocur maintains an extensive patent estate for its proprietary technology, including patents that cover active ingredient composition of matter, manufacturing processes, equipment, formulations, and other areas protected by intellectual property laws in the United States and throughout the world. Vanocur's intellectual-property rights enable it to drive innovation and long-term investment in the coke industry.

## **Forward Looking Statement**

This statement may contain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward-looking statements may include, but may not be limited to, direct or indirect statements concerning: Vanocur's protection of its rights to the intellectual property comprising its "Big BLOCK" technology; and its exposure to intellectual property challenges and litigation. Any forward-looking statements in this statement are based on Vanocur's current expectations and beliefs of future events and are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties that could cause actual results to differ materially and adversely from those set forth in or implied by such forward-looking statements. All information in this press release is as of the date of the release, and Vanocur undertakes no duty to update this information unless required by law.

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