

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
OIL AND GAS SECTION**

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 01-0221767

ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY QUEST RESEARCH & DEV. CORP. (684630), AS TO THE WARNCKE, ELTON (03372) LEASE, WELL NOS. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 AND 7, LA VERNIA FIELD, GUADALUPE COUNTY, TEXAS

FINAL ORDER

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on July 19, 1999, and that the respondent, Quest Research & Dev. Corp. (684630), failed to appear or respond to the notice. Pursuant to § 1.49 of the Commission's General Rules of Practice and Procedure [Tex. R. R. Comm'n, 16 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 1.49] and after being duly submitted to the Railroad Commission of Texas at conference held in its offices in Austin, Texas, the Commission makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Quest Research & Dev. Corp. (684630), ("respondent") was given Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent P-5 address on the Form P-5 (Organization Report) address, which was signed and returned to the Commission.
2. The returned certified receipt (green card) that was attached to the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing, was signed and returned to the Commission on June 11, 1999. The certified receipt has been on file with the Commission for 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance.
3. On June 18, 1997, Respondent, a Corporation, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individuals: Donald M. Briggs; President and Brant M. Briggs; Vice-President.
4. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 on the Warncke, Elton (03372) Lease ("subject wells"/"subject lease") by filing a Form P-4 (Producer's Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance) with the Commission, effective on March 1, 1996.
5. The subject wells have been dry or inactive for a period in excess of one year. Commission inspection and/or production reports indicate that the subject wells ceased production on or before December 1, 1997.
6. The subject wells have not been properly plugged in accordance with, and are not otherwise in compliance with, Statewide Rule 14.
7. Usable quality water in the area is likely to be contaminated by migrations or discharges of saltwater and other oil and gas wastes from the subject wells. Unplugged wellbores constitute a cognizable threat to public health and safety because of the probability of pollution.

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 01-0221767

8. The estimated cost to the State of plugging the subject wells is \$11,200.00.
9. Commission district office inspections were conducted on May 5, 1998, July 29, 1998, November 20, 1998, January 21, 1999, February 19, 1999, March 31, 1999 and April 22, 1999 for the Warncke, Elton (03372) Lease. The sign and identification posted at the lease entrance is illegible.
10. Commission district office inspections were conducted on May 5, 1998, July 29, 1998, November 2, 1998, January 21, 1999, February 19, 1999, March 31, 1999 and April 22, 1999 for the Warncke, Elton (03372) Lease. The signs and identification posted at each well displayed incorrect information.
11. Commission district office inspections were conducted on May 5, 1998, July 29, 1998, November 2, 1998, January 21, 1999, February 19, 1999, March 31, 1999 and April 22, 1999 for the Warncke, Elton (03372) Lease. The sign and identification posted at the tank battery was illegible.
12. The respondent has not demonstrated good faith since it failed to plug or otherwise place the subject wells and subject lease in compliance after being notified of the violations by the District Office and failed to appear at the hearing to explain its inaction.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Proper notice was issued by the Railroad Commission to respondent and all other appropriate persons legally entitled to notice.
2. All things necessary to the Commission attaining jurisdiction over the subject matter and the parties in this hearing have been performed or have occurred.
3. Respondent is in violation of Commission Statewide Rules 3(a) and 14(b)(2).
4. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Rule 3(a), which requires that each property that produces oil, gas or geothermal resources and each oil, gas or geothermal resource well and tank, or the approved crude oil measuring facility shall post signs or identification.
5. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject wells and lease in compliance with all applicable Statutes and Commission rules, specifically Statewide Rules 14, 58, and 79 and Chapters 89 and 91, Texas Natural Resources Code.
6. The documented violations committed by the respondent constitute acts deemed serious, a hazard to the public health, and demonstrate a lack of good faith pursuant to TEX. NAT. RES. CODE ANN. §81.0531(c) (Vernon 1993).

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 01-0221767

IT IS ORDERED THAT within 30 days from the day immediately following the date this order becomes final:

1. Quest Research & Dev. Corp. (684630), shall plug and or otherwise place the Warncke, Elton (03372) Lease, Well Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7, La Vernia Field, Guadalupe County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations; and
2. Quest Research & Dev. Corp. (684630), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **SEVEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$7,000.00)**.

It is further **ORDERED** by the Commission that this order shall not be final and effective until 20 days after it is actually mailed to the parties by the Commission; provided that if a motion for rehearing is filed by any party at interest within such 20-day period, this order shall not become final and effective until such motion is overruled, or if rehearing is granted, this order shall be subject to further action by the Commission. Pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.146(e), the time allotted for Commission action on a motion for rehearing in this case prior to its being overruled by operation of law, is hereby extended until 90 days from the date the order is served on the parties.

All requested findings of fact and conclusions of law which are not expressly adopted herein are denied. All pending motions and requests for relief not previously granted or granted herein are denied.

Noncompliance with the provisions of this order is subject to enforcement by the Attorney General and subject to civil penalties of up to \$10,000.00 per day per violation.

Done this 19th day of October, 1999.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated October 19, 1999)

MFE/sa