

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL
HEARINGS SECTION**

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 06-0280593

ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY TEXLA OPERATING COMPANY (849732), AS TO THE COWHERD LEASE, WELL NO. 1 (129107), AND THE ASHLEY, PEGGY LEASE, WELL NO. 1 (129114), KASON DRAKE (PETIT UPPER B) FIELD, MARION COUNTY, TEXAS

FINAL ORDER

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on July 11, 2013, and that the respondent, Texla Operating Company (849732), failed to appear or respond to the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing. 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. Texla Operating Company (849732), ("Respondent"), was given Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent Form P-5 (Organization Report) address, which was returned to Commission.
2. The returned certified receipt envelope containing the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing, was returned to the Commission marked "return to sender, unable to forward" June 6, 2013. The returned certified envelope is included in the file and has been on file with the Commission for 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance.
3. On April 19, 2012, Respondent, a Corporation, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individual(s): Deborah K. Shuckers, President; and Dale Gibson, Vice-President.
4. Deborah K. Shuckers, was a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent, as defined by Texas Natural Resources Code Section 91.114, during the time period of the violations of Commission rules committed by respondent.

5. Dale Gibson, was a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent, as defined by Texas Natural Resources Code Section 91.114, during the time period of the violations of Commission rules committed by respondent.
6. The violations of Commission rules committed by respondent are related to safety and the control of pollution.
7. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well No. 1 (129107) on the Cowherd Lease and Well No. 1 (129114) on the Ashley, Peggy Lease ("subject wells"/"subject leases") by filing P-4 Forms (Producers Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance) effective on November 1, 2010.
8. Respondent's P-5 (Organization Report) became delinquent on October 1, 2013. Respondent had \$25,000 cash as its financial assurance at the time of its last P-5 renewal.
9. Well No. 1 (129107) on the Cowherd Lease ceased production in November 2002.
10. Well No. 1 (129114) on the Ashley, Peggy Lease ceased production in November 2002.
11. The subject wells have not been properly plugged in accordance with, and are not otherwise in compliance with Statewide Rule 14.
12. The Statewide Rule 14b2 plugging extension for Well No. 1 (129107) on the Cowherd Lease was denied for an inactive P-5.
13. The Statewide Rule 14b2 plugging extension for Well No. 1 (129114) on the Ashley, Peggy Lease was denied for an inactive P-5.
14. Usable quality groundwater 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 the public health and safety because of the potential for pollution.
15. The estimated cost to the State for plugging Well No. 1 (129107) on the Cowherd Lease is \$30,300.00.
16. The estimated cost to the State for plugging Well No. 1 (129114) on the Ashley, Peggy Lease is \$30,300.00.
17. A Commission District inspection was conducted on October 5, 2012 for the Cowherd Lease. The Bradenhead for Well No. 1 (129107) is not piped to the surface thereby making it impossible to verify the pressure on the well.
18. A Commission District inspection was conducted on October 5, 2012 for the Ashley, Peggy Lease. The Bradenhead for Well No. 1 (129114) is not piped to the surface thereby making it impossible to verify the pressure on the well.

19. A Commission District inspection was conducted on October 5, 2012 for the Cowherd Lease. There is vegetation inside the firewall around the tank battery creating a fire hazard.
20. A Commission District inspection was conducted on October 5, 2012 for the Ashley, Peggy Lease. There is vegetation inside the firewall around the tank battery creating a fire hazard.
21. The Respondent has not demonstrated good faith since it failed to timely plug or otherwise place the subject leases and subject wells 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 to 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 14(b)(2), 17(a) and 21(i).
4. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 17(a), which requires that all wells shall be equipped with a Bradenhead.
5. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 21(i), which requires that any rubbish or debris that might constitute a fire hazard shall be removed to a distance of at least 150 feet from the vicinity of any well, tank or pump station. All waste shall be burned or disposed of in such a manner as to avoid creating a fire hazard.
6. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject leases and subject wells in compliance with all applicable Commission rules according to Statewide Rules 14, 58, and 79 and Chapters 89 and 91 of the Texas Natural Resources Code.
7. 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.

8. As a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent at the time respondent violated Commission rules related to safety and the control of pollution, Deborah K. Shuckers, and any other organization in which he may hold a position of ownership or control, shall be subject to the restrictions of Texas Natural Resource Code Section 91.114(a)(2) for a period of no more than seven years from the date the order entered in this matter becomes final, or until the conditions that constituted the violations herein are corrected or are being corrected in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed; and all administrative, civil, and criminal penalties and all cleanup and plugging costs incurred by the State relating to those conditions are paid or are being paid in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed, whichever is earlier.
9. As a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent at the time respondent violated Commission rules related to safety and the control of pollution, Dale Gibson, and any other organization in which he may hold a position of ownership or control, shall be subject to the restrictions of Texas Natural Resource Code Section 91.114(a)(2) for a period of no more than seven years from the date the order entered in this matter becomes final, or until the conditions that constituted the violations herein are corrected or are being corrected in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed; and all administrative, civil, and criminal penalties and all cleanup and plugging costs incurred by the State relating to those conditions are paid or are being paid in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed, whichever is earlier.

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

1. Texla Operating Company (849732), shall plug the Cowherd Lease, Well No. 1 (129107), and the Ashley, Peggy Lease, Well No. 1 (129114), Kason Drake (Pettit Upper B) Field, Marion County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations; and
2. Texla Operating Company (849732), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **TWENTY TWO THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED SEVENTY ONE DOLLARS (\$22,871.00)**.

It is further **ORDERED** by the Commission that this order shall not be final and effective until 20 days after a party is notified of the Commission's order. A party is presumed to have been notified of the Commission's order three days after the date on which the notice is actually mailed. If a timely motion for rehearing is filed by any party at interest, this order shall not become final and effective until such motion is overruled, or if such motion 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 parties are notified of the order.

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 18th day of February 2014.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated February 18, 2014)

TJJ/sa