

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS  
HEARINGS DIVISION**

**OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 04-0280295**

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**ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY ERIN OIL CO. (253366), AS TO THE POLLOCK GAS UNIT LEASE, WELL NO. 1 (127553), HARGILL (11400 FRIO) FIELD, WILLACY COUNTY, TEXAS**

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**FINAL ORDER**

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on February 27, 2014, and that the respondent, Erin Oil Co. (253366), failed to appear or respond to the Notice of 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. Erin Oil Co. (253366), ("Respondent"), was given Notice of Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent Form P-5 (Organization Report) address.
2. The certified envelope containing the Original Complaint and the Notice of Hearing, was delivered and signed for on January 21, 2014. The electronic receipt 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 October 4, 2011, Respondent, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individual(s): Bobby Frank Hicks; President.
4. Bobby Frank Hicks, 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. The violations of Commission rules committed by respondent are related to safety and the control of pollution.

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6. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well No. 1 (127553) on the Pollock Gas Unit Lease ("subject well"/"subject lease") by filing a P-4 Form (Producers Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance) effective on April 1, 2004.
7. Respondent's P-5 (Organization Report) became delinquent on January 1, 2012. Respondent had a \$25,000 Letter of Credit as its financial assurance at the time of its last P-5 renewal.
8. Production from Well No. 1 (127553) on the Pollock Gas Unit Lease ceased prior to January 1993.
9. The Statewide 14b2 plugging extension for Well No. 1 (127553) on the Pollock Gas Unit Lease was denied on April 2, 2009 for failure to file and H-15 test.
10. The subject well has not been properly plugged in accordance with, and is not otherwise in compliance with, Statewide Rule 14.
11. Usable quality groundwater in the area is likely to be contaminated by migrations or discharges of saltwater and other oil and gas wastes from the subject well. Unplugged wellbores constitute a cognizable threat to the public health and safety because of the probability of pollution.
12. The total estimated cost to the State for plugging Well No. 1 (127553) on the Pollock Gas Unit Lease is \$89,552.00.
13. Commission District inspections were conducted on October 24, 2006, September 11, 2009 and October 23, 2009 for the Pollock Gas Unit Lease. The signs or identification required to be posed at the lease entrance, well and tank battery were missing.
14. Failure to properly identify a well by the posting of the sign required by Statewide Rule 3 has the potential for causing confusion and delay in remedying a violation or emergency and poses a threat to the public health and safety.
15. According to Commission records, Well No. 1 (127553) of the Pollock Gas Unit Lease is more than 25 years old, inactive, unplugged and subject to testing requirements. Commission records further indicate the subject well was due for a fluid level or hydraulic pressure test in March 2009. Respondent failed to conduct the required test or to plug the well.
16. The Respondent has not demonstrated good faith since it failed to timely plug or otherwise place the subject lease and subject well 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 3, 14(b)(2) and 14(b)(3).
4. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 3, which requires that each property that produces oil, gas or geothermal resources and each oil, gas or geothermal resource well and tank, or other approved crude oil measuring facility shall post signs or identification.
5. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 14(b)(3), which requires the operator of any well more than 25 years old that becomes inactive shall plug the well or successfully conduct a fluid level or hydraulic pressure test establishing that the well does not pose a potential threat of harm to natural resources, including surface and subsurface water, oil and gas.
6. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease and subject well 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, Bobby Frank Hicks, 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.

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

1. Erin Oil Co. (253366) , shall plug the Pollock Gas Unit Lease, Well No. 1 (127553), Hargill (11400 Frio) Field, Willacy County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations; and
2. Erin Oil Co. (253366), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **SEVENTEEN THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED TWENTY DOLLARS (\$17,820.00)**.

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 9<sup>th</sup> day of December 2014.

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS**

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated December 9, 2014)

TJJ/sa