

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

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 03-0262427

**ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY MASTERS
ONSHORE, LLC (532952), AS TO THE SHELDON LEASE, WELL NO. 1R (186730), SMITH
POINT EAST (F-26) FIELD, CHAMBERS COUNTY, TEXAS**

FINAL ORDER

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on September 24, 2009 and that the respondent, Masters Onshore, LLC (532952), 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. Masters Onshore, LLC (532952), ("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, which was returned to the Commission marked "return to sender."
2. The returned certified receipt containing the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing mailed to Respondent's most recent P-5 address, was returned to the Commission marked "return to sender" on August 5, 2009. The returned certified receipt (green card) attached to the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing mailed to Richard Harry Lee, Resident Agent and Manager of Respondent at his most recent P-5 address, was signed and returned to the Commission on August 11, 2009. The certified receipts have been on file with the Commission for 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance.
3. On February 20, 2008, Respondent filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individual(s): Richard Harry Lee, Manager; and John William Barton, Manager.
4. Richard Harry Lee, 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. John William Barton, 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. 1R on the Sheldon Lease ("subject well"/"subject lease") by filing a Form P-4 (Producer's Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance) with the Commission effective on November 1, 2004.
8. According to Commission records the Respondent's Form P-5 (Organization Report) became delinquent on January 1, 2009. Respondent had a \$25,000.00 Letter of Credit as its financial assurance at the time of its last P-5 renewal.
9. Production from the subject well ceased on or before December 31, 2001.
10. The Statewide Rule 14(b)(2) plugging extension for the subject well was denied on December 31, 2008, for a non-active Form P-5 (Organization Report).
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 the subject well is \$234,879.00.
13. Commission District inspections were conducted on February 3, 2009 and June 19, 2009 for the Sheldon Lease. The sign or identification required to be posted at the well was 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. Respondent has a prior history of Commission rule violations including the following docket(s):

Docket No. 03-0254795; Final Order Served: July 15, 2008,
Docket No. 03-0254796; Final Order Served: July 15, 2008; and
Docket No. 03-0254797; Final Order Served: July 15, 2008.

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 and 14(b)(2).
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 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.
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).
7. 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, Richard Harry Lee, 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.
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, John William Barton, 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

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

1. Masters Onshore, LLC (532952), shall plug the Sheldon Lease, Well No. 1R (186730), Smith Point East (F-26) Field, Chambers County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations; and
2. Masters Onshore, LLC (532952), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **TWO THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED FIFTY DOLLARS (\$2,250.00)**.

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 24th day of November 2009.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated November 24, 2009)

JD/sa