

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

**OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 04-0267005**

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**ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY PMO (668494), AS TO THE BECKMAN LEASE, WELL NO. 2 (DRILLING PERMIT NO. 531948), MAY (MASSIVE 3) FIELD, KLEBERG 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 May 5, 2011 and that the respondent, PMO (668494), 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. PMO (668494), ("Respondent") was given a Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent P-5 address on the Form P-5 Organization Report.
2. The returned certified receipt attached to the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing was mailed to Respondent's most recent P-5 address, was signed on March 9, 2011 and the electronic verification is on file with the Commission. The certified electronic verification has been on file with the Commission for 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance.
3. On August 31, 2010, Respondent, a Corporation, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individual(s): Steve Blackwell, President; and Holly Higgins, Vice-President.
4. Steve Blackwell, was 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. Holly Higgins, was 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. 2 (531948) on the Beckman Lease ("subject well"/"subject lease") by filing a W-1 Form (Application to Drill, Deepen, Plug Back or Re-Enter) with the Commission which was received on May 15, 2003.

8. Commission records indicate that Respondent's Form P-5 (Organization Report) is active. Respondent has \$50,000.00 cash as its financial assurance.
9. The subject well has never produced since the re-entry.
10. A Commission District inspection conducted on March 15, 2011 shows that the subject well was plugged with State Funds.
11. Usable quality groundwater in the area could have been 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. Commission District inspections were conducted on January 13, 2009 to March 15, 2011 on the Beckman Lease. Well No. 2 (531948) has been completed with casing and wellhead. Despite completion of the well, Respondent failed to file the required completion report.
13. The Respondent did not demonstrate good faith since it failed to plug or otherwise place the subject lease and 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 was responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rules 14(b)(2) and 16(b).
4. Respondent was responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 16(b), which requires that the owner, or operator of an oil, gas or geothermal resource well, must within thirty days (30) after the completion of such well, or the plugging of such well, if the well is a dry hole, shall file with the Commission the appropriate completion or plugging report.
5. Respondent was 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.

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, Steve Blackwell, 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, Holly Higgins, 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. PMO (668494), shall plug the Beckman Lease, Well No. 2 (Drilling Permit No. 531948), May (Massive 3) Field, Kleberg County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations;
2. PMO (668494), shall pay the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **TWO THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$2,500.00)**.

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. GOVT. 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 11<sup>th</sup> day of October 2011.

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS**

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated October 11, 2011)

MFE/sa