

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

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 7B-0219033

ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY PETROX ENERGY CORPORATION (660946), AS TO THE FAMBRO, SAM A. (15332) LEASE, WELL NOS. 101, 200, 204, 205 AND 206, STEPHENS COUNTY REGULAR FIELD, STEPHENS COUNTY, TEXAS

FINAL ORDER

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on July 29, 1999, and that the respondent, Petrox Energy Corporation (660946), 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. Petrox Energy Corporation (660946), ("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 returned to the Commission marked "attempted not known."
2. The returned certified receipt containing the Original Complaint and the Notice of Hearing Opportunity, was returned to the Commission marked "attempted not known" on June 23, 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 February 6, 1995, Respondent, a Corporation, filed an Organization Report (Form P-5) with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individual: William Gary Buck; President.
4. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well Nos. 101, 200, 204, 205 and 206 on the Fambro, Sam A. (15332) Lease ("subject wells"/"subject lease") by filing a Form P-4 (Producer's Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance) with the Commission, effective on February 1, 1995.
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 August 1, 1995.

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6. The subject wells were not properly plugged in a timely manner, in accordance with, and were not otherwise in compliance with, Statewide Rule 14.
7. Usable quality water in the area could have been 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.
8. The subject wells were plugged by the State with Commission funds between April 14, 1998 and April 20, 1998.
9. The total cost to the state for plugging the subject wells was \$24,930.00.
10. The respondent did not demonstrate 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 Rule 14(b)(2).
4. 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.
5. 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).

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

1. Petrox Energy Corporation (660946), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$10,000.00)** and **REIMBURSE** State Funds in the amount of **TWENTY FOUR THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED THIRTY DOLLARS (\$24,930.00)**.

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