

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
ENERGY, MINERALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT  
OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION**

**IN THE MATTER OF APPLICATION OF  
THE ESTATE OF JOHN R. STEARNS TO  
REMOVE NORTHERN PACIFIC OIL AND GAS, INC.  
AS OPERATOR OF RECORD OF THE NEW MEXICO  
BA STATE #001, NEW MEXICO STATE BA #002,  
AND NEW MEXICO BA #004.**

**CASE NO.: 23721  
ORDER NO.: R-23335**

**ORDER**

The Director of the New Mexico Oil Conservation Division (“OCD”), having heard this matter through its Hearing Examiner on September 7, 2023, and after considering the testimony, evidence, and recommendation of the Hearing Officer and Technical Examiner, issues the following Order.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. The Estate of John R. Stearns (“Estate”) submitted an application (“Application”) to remove Northern Pacific Oil and Gas, Inc. (“Northern”) as operator of record of the following wells (“the Wells”):
  - New Mexico BA State #001 (API: 30-005-20944)
  - New Mexico BA State #003 (API: 30-005-21021)
  - New Mexico BA State #004 (API: 30-005-21023)
2. The Estate is the successor in interest of John R. Stearns who was a registered operator with the OCD.
3. The Estate is the record title owner of State Lease dated June 10, 1942.
4. The Estate seeks to plug the Wells as the designated Operator.
5. Northern is the registered Operator of record for the Wells with OCD.
6. At the September 7, 2023, Hearing, the Estate presented evidence by affidavit in support of its Application which was admitted to the record without objection.
7. The evidence shows that multiple attempts have been made to contact Northern, and the Estate has received no response.
8. Mr. Santiago Garcia, CEO of Northern, submitted a letter of consent to remove Northern as operator of record.
9. Northern submitted Notices of Intent for the Wells to include a proposed plugging plan.
10. Subsequently, Northern submitted paperwork with a completed plugging plan for the Wells.

11. OCD approved the paperwork and the status of the Wells is currently “plugged, not released.”


### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

12. OCD has jurisdiction to issue this Order pursuant to NMSA 1978 § 70-2-12.
13. OCD satisfied the notice requirements for the hearing as required by 19.15.4.9 NMAC.
14. Northern submitted the necessary and correct paperwork and successfully plugged the Wells.
15. Northern submitted a consent letter and may therefore complete a C-145.

### **ORDER**

16. The application to to remove Northern as Operator of Record of the Wells is hereby denied.
17. OCD retains jurisdiction of this matter for the entry of such orders as may be deemed necessary.

#### **STATE OF NEW MEXICO OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**GERASIMOS RAZATOS**  
**DIRECTOR (Acting)**  
GR/jag

**Date:** 8/28/2024