

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

IN THE MATTER OF THE HEARING
CALLED BY THE OIL CONSERVATION
DIVISION FOR THE PURPOSE OF
CONSIDERING:

CASE NO. 9744
ORDER NO. R-9013

APPLICATION OF RICHMOND PETROLEUM, INC.
FOR COMPULSORY POOLING AND AN UNORTHODOX
COAL GAS WELL LOCATION, SAN JUAN COUNTY,
NEW MEXICO.

ORDER OF THE DIVISION

BY THE DIVISION:

This cause came on for hearing at 8:15 a.m. on September 6, 1989 and on October 4, 1989, at Santa Fe, New Mexico, before Examiner Michael E. Stogner.

NOW, on this 10th day of October, 1989, the Division Director, having considered the testimony, the record and the recommendations of the Examiner, and being fully advised in the premises,

FINDS THAT:

(1) Due public notice having been given as required by law, the Division has jurisdiction of this cause and the subject matter thereof.

(2) At the September 6, 1989 hearing, Division Case Nos. 9744, 9745, 9746 and 9750 were consolidated for the purpose of testimony.

(3) The applicant, Richmond Petroleum, Inc., seeks an order pooling all mineral interests in the Basin-Fruitland Coal Gas Pool, underlying Lots 3 and 4, the S/2 NW/4, and the SW/4 (W/2 equivalent) of Section 10, Township 32 North, Range 6 West, NMPM, San Juan County, New Mexico, forming a standard 279-acre gas spacing and proration unit for said pool.

(4) The applicant has the right to drill a well within the proposed proration unit and further seeks approval for an unorthodox coal gas well location 1450 feet from the North line and 1815 feet from the West line (Unit F) of said Section 10.

(5) At the September 6, 1989 hearing Meridian Oil, Inc., an operator and mineral interest owner in the area objected to this application in its entirety; however, Meridian appeared at the October 4, 1989 hearing to withdraw such objection and further went on record in support of the subject application.

(6) The unorthodox gas well location request is necessitated by topographical conditions caused by the presence of the Navajo Reservoir throughout a large portion of the subject acreage making a standard well location in the SW/4 of said Section 10 impractical.

(7) The applicant also presented testimony indicating that a well directionally drilled from the subject location to a standard bottomhole coal gas well location within the subject unit would not be economically feasible.

(8) No other offset operators or interest owners objected to the unorthodox location of the proposed well.

(9) There are interest owners in the proposed proration unit who have not agreed to pool their interests.

(10) To avoid the drilling of unnecessary wells, to protect correlative rights, to prevent waste and to afford to the owner of each interest in said unit the opportunity to recover or receive without unnecessary expense his just and fair share of the coal gas in said pool, the subject application should be approved by pooling all mineral interests, whatever they may be, within said unit.

(11) The applicant should be designated the operator of the subject well and unit.

(12) Any non-consenting working interest owner should be afforded the opportunity to pay his share of estimated well costs to the operator in lieu of paying his share of reasonable well costs out of production.

(13) The applicant has proposed a 200 percent risk penalty to be assessed against those interest owners subject to the force-pooling provisions of this order, and in support thereof presented evidence and testimony at the hearing.

(14) Based on precedent established in compulsory pooling cases in the Basin-Fruitland Coal Gas Pool, the proposed 200 percent risk penalty is excessive and should therefore be reduced to 156 percent.

(15) Any non-consenting working interest owner who does not pay his share of estimated well costs should have withheld from production his share of reasonable well costs plus an additional 156 percent thereof as a reasonable charge for the risk involved in the drilling of the well.

(16) Any non-consenting interest owner should be afforded the opportunity to object to the actual well costs but actual well costs should be adopted as the reasonable well costs in the absence of such objection.

(17) Following determination of reasonable well costs, any non-consenting working interest owner who has paid his share of estimated costs should pay to the operator any amount that reasonable well costs exceed estimated well costs and should receive from the operator any amount that paid estimated well costs exceed reasonable well costs.

(18) At the time of the hearing, the applicant proposed that the reasonable monthly fixed charges for supervision while drilling and producing be \$4500.00 and \$450.00, respectively.

(19) Also based on established precedent from prior compulsory pooling cases in the Basin-Fruitland Coal Gas Pool, the above drilling and producing charges are in excess of the

normal monthly fixed charges in this area for a coal gas well and should therefore be adjusted to reflect a more reasonable rate.

(20) \$3500.00 per month while drilling and \$350.00 per month while producing should be fixed as reasonable charges for supervision (combined fixed rates); the operator should be authorized to withhold from production the proportionate share of such supervision charges attributable to each non-consenting working interest, and in addition thereto, the operator should be authorized to withhold from production the proportionate share of actual expenditures required for operating the subject well, not in excess of what are reasonable, attributable to each non-consenting working interest.

(21) All proceeds from production from the subject well which are not disbursed for any reason should be placed in escrow to be paid to the true owner thereof upon demand and proof of ownership.

(22) Upon the failure of the operator of said pooled unit to commence drilling of the well to which said unit is dedicated on or before January 1, 1990, the order pooling said unit should become null and void and of no further effect whatsoever.

(23) Should all the parties to this force-pooling reach voluntary agreement subsequent to entry of this order, this order should thereafter be of no further effect.

(24) The operator of the well and unit should notify the Director of the Division in writing of the subsequent voluntary agreement of all parties subject to the force-pooling provisions of this order.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

(1) All mineral interests, whatever they may be, in the Basin-Fruitland Coal Gas Pool, underlying Lots 3 and 4, the S/2 NW/4, and the SW/4 (W/2 equivalent) of Section 10, Township 32 North, Range 6 West, NMPM, San Juan County, New Mexico, are hereby pooled to form a standard 279-acre gas

Case No. 9744
Order No. R-9013
Page No. 5

spacing and proration unit to be dedicated to a well to be drilled at an unorthodox coal gas well location 1450 feet from the North line and 1815 feet from the West line (Unit F) of said Section 10.

PROVIDED HOWEVER THAT, the operator of said unit shall commence the drilling of said well on or before the 1st day of January, 1990, and shall thereafter continue the drilling of said well with due diligence to a depth sufficient to test the Basin-Fruitland Coal Gas Pool.

PROVIDED FURTHER THAT, in the event said operator does not commence the drilling of said well on or before the 1st day of January, 1990, Decretory Paragraph No. (1) of this order shall be null and void and of no effect whatsoever, unless said operator obtains a time extension from the Division for good cause shown.

PROVIDED FURTHER THAT, should said well not be drilled to completion, or abandonment, within 120 days after commencement thereof, said operator shall appear before the Division Director and show cause why Decretory Paragraph No. (1) of this order should not be rescinded.

(2) Richmond Petroleum Inc. is hereby designated the operator of the subject well and unit.

(3) After the effective date of this order and within 90 days prior to commencing said well, the operator shall furnish the Division and each known working interest owner in the subject unit an itemized schedule of estimated well costs.

(4) Within 30 days from the date the schedule of estimated well costs is furnished to him, any non-consenting working interest owner shall have the right to pay his share of estimated well costs to the operator in lieu of paying his share of reasonable well costs out of production, and any such owner who pays his share of estimated well costs as provided above shall remain liable for operating costs but shall not be liable for risk charges.

(5) The operator shall furnish the Division and each known working interest owner an itemized schedule of actual well costs within 90 days following completion of the well; if no objection to the actual well costs is received by the Division and the Division has not objected within 45 days following receipt of said schedule, the actual well costs shall be the reasonable well costs; provided however, if there is an objection to actual well costs within said 45-day period the Division will determine reasonable well costs after public notice and hearing.

(6) Within 60 days following determination of reasonable well costs, any non-consenting working interest owner who has paid his share of estimated costs in advance as provided above shall pay to the operator his pro rata share of the amount that reasonable well costs exceed estimated well costs and shall receive from the operator his pro rata share of the amount that estimated well costs exceed reasonable well costs.

(7) The operator is hereby authorized to withhold the following costs and charges from production:

- (A) The pro rata share of reasonable well costs attributable to each non-consenting working interest owner who has not paid his share of estimated well costs within 30 days from the date the schedule of estimated well costs is furnished to him; and
- (B) As a charge for the risk involved in the drilling of the well, 156 percent of the pro rata share of reasonable well costs attributable to each non-consenting working interest owner who has not paid his share of estimated well costs within 30 days from the date the schedule of estimated well costs is furnished to him.

(8) The operator shall distribute said costs and charges withheld from production to the parties who advanced the well costs.

(9) \$3500.00 per month while drilling and \$350.00 per month while producing are hereby fixed as reasonable charges for supervision (combined fixed rates); the operator is hereby authorized to withhold from production the proportionate share of such supervision charges attributable to each non-consenting working interest, and in addition thereto, the operator is hereby authorized to withhold from production the proportionate share of actual expenditures required for operating such well, not in excess of what are reasonable, attributable to each non-consenting working interest.

(10) Any unleased mineral interest shall be considered a seven-eighths (7/8) working interest and a one-eighth (1/8) royalty interest for the purpose of allocating costs and charges under the terms of this order.

(11) Any well costs or charges which are to be paid out of production shall be withheld only from the working interest's share of production, and no costs or charges shall be withheld from production attributable to royalty interests.

(12) All proceeds from production from the subject well which are not disbursed for any reason shall be placed in escrow in San Juan County, New Mexico, to be paid to the true owner thereof upon demand and proof of ownership; the operator shall notify the Division of the name and address of said escrow agent within 30 days from the date of first deposit with said escrow agent.

(13) Should all the parties to this force-pooling reach voluntary agreement subsequent to entry of this order, this order shall thereafter be of no further effect.

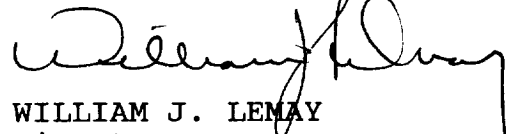
(14) The operator of the well and unit shall notify the Director of the Division in writing of the subsequent voluntary agreement of all parties subject to the force-pooling provisions of this order.

Case No. 9744
Order No. R-9013
Page No. 8

(15) Jurisdiction of this cause is retained for the entry of such further orders as the Division may deem necessary.

DONE at Santa Fe, New Mexico, on the day and year hereinabove designated.

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'William J. Lemay', is written over the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping line extending downwards from the end of the name.

WILLIAM J. LEMAY
Director

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