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

IN THE MATTER OF: )  
APPLICATION OF STRATA ENERGY RESOURCES )  
CORPORATION FOR COMPULSORY POOLING, LEA ) CASE NO. 10235  
COUNTY, NEW MEXICO. )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

EXAMINER HEARING

BEFORE: Michael E. Stogner, Examiner

February 7, 1991  
11:20 a.m.  
Santa Fe, New Mexico

This matter came on for hearing before the Oil Conservation Division on February 7, 1991, at 11:20 a.m. at the Oil Conservation Conference Room, State Land Office Building, 310 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe, New Mexico, before Susan G. Ptacek, a Certified Court Reporter No. 124, State of New Mexico.

FOR: OIL CONSERVATION      BY: SUSAN G. PTACEK  
DIVISION                      Certified Court Reporter  
CCR No. 1224

## I N D E X

February 7, 1991  
 Examiner Hearing  
 Case No. 10235

PAGE  
 3

## APPEARANCES

## STRATA ENERGY WITNESSES:

DAN THORSEN

Direct Examination by Ms. Aubrey

4

JEFFREY SMITH

Direct Examination by Ms. Aubrey

13

Examination by Examiner Stogner

20

Examination by Mr. Stovall

21

## REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

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## E X H I B I T S

ID Admtd

## STRATA ENERGY EXHIBIT

1	22	11
2	6	11
3	7	11
4	8	11
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6	9	11
7	11	11
8	17	20

## A P P E A R A N C E S

FOR THE DIVISION: ROBERT G. STOVALL, ESQ.  
General Counsel  
Oil Conservation Division  
State Land Office Building  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

FOR STRATA ENERGY KELLAHIN, KELLAHIN & AUBREY  
RESOURCES CORPORATION: Attorneys at Law  
BY: KAREN AUBREY, ESQ.  
117 N. Guadalupe  
P.O. Box 2265  
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504

\* \* \*

1 EXAMINER STOGNER: Call the next Case 10235.

2 MR. STOVALL: Application of Strata Energy Resources  
3 Corporation for compulsory pooling, Lea County, New Mexico.

4 EXAMINER STOGNER: Call for appearances.

5 MS. AUBREY: Karen Aubrey with the Santa Fe firm of  
6 Kellahin, Kellahin & Aubrey for the applicant.

7 EXAMINER STOGNER: Are there any other appearances?

8 Do you have any witnesses, Miss Aubrey?

9 MS. AUBREY: I have two witnesses to be sworn.

10 EXAMINER STOGNER: Would both witnesses please stand  
11 and be sworn at this time.

12 (Whereupon the witnesses were duly  
13 sworn.)

14 MS. AUBREY: Call Dan Thorsen.

15 DAN THORSEN,  
16 the Witness herein, having been first duly, was examined  
17 and testified as follows:

18 DIRECT EXAMINATION

19 BY MS. AUBREY:

20 Q. Would you state your name for the record,  
21 please?

22 A. Dan Thorsen.

23 Q. Could you spell that for the reporter, please?

24 A. T-h-o-r-s-e-n.

25 Q. Mr. Thorsen, how are you employed?

1 A. I'm self-employed.

2 Q. What do you do?

3 A. Landman.

4 Q. Where do you work?

5 A. I work with a group of consultants in Midland,  
6 Texas.

7 Q. Are you appearing here on behalf of Strata  
8 Energy Resources Corporation as a consulting landman?

9 A. Yes, I am.

10 Q. Have you testified previously before the New  
11 Mexico Oil Conservation Division?

12 A. No, I haven't.

13 Q. Would you review your experience in petroleum  
14 land titles for the examiner?

15 A. Well, I've been employed as a consultant for the  
16 last six years. I've worked as head landman for Harvard  
17 Petroleum. We had an office in Midland. And I've been  
18 working as a landman for the last 11 years.

19 Q. Are you familiar with the application of Strata  
20 Energy Resources Corporation for compulsory pooling that's  
21 being heard today?

22 A. Yes, I am.

23 MS. AUBREY: Mr. Examiner, I tender Mr. Thorsen as an  
24 expert in petroleum land titles.

25 EXAMINER STOGNER: Mr. Thorsen, have you had any

1 formal education?

2 THE WITNESS: I have a B.S. from Texas Tech.

3 EXAMINER STOGNER: In what studies?

4 THE WITNESS: Agriculture.

5 EXAMINER STOGNER: Agriculture?

6 THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.

7 EXAMINER STOGNER: I will recognize Mr. Thorsen as a  
8 practical landman.

9 Q. (By Mr. Vandiver) Mr. Thorsen, would you look  
10 at what we've marked as Exhibit No. 2 in this case, which  
11 is a lease map, and explain for the examiner where the  
12 proposed well that we're talking about today is located,  
13 and what the lease situation is in regard to that well?

14 A. The proposed well site will be in the southwest  
15 quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 14, T 19 South,  
16 R 38 East, Lea County. Common ownership in the north --  
17 there is a common ownership in the northeast quarter of  
18 Section 14.

19 Q. Strata Energy Resources is seeking to pool both  
20 a 40-acre proration unit for oil, and 160-acre proration  
21 unit for gas; is that right?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. Have you examined the land titles under both the  
24 160 and the 40 in connection with this application?

25 A. Yes, and they are common.

1 Q. As well as common, are they undivided across the  
2 160?

3 A. That's correct.

4 Q. You have outlined an area in yellow on Exhibit  
5 2, is that the 40-acre proration unit that you're proposing  
6 for an oil well?

7 A. Yes, it is.

8 Q. What will be the name of this well, Mr. Thorsen?

9 A. Peacock No. 1.

10 Q. Let me have you look at what we've marked as  
11 Exhibit No. 3. In connection with your employment as a  
12 consulting landman for Strata Resources were you asked to  
13 contact working interest owners in the northeast quarter in  
14 order to obtain their voluntary participation in a unit?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Would you describe for the examiner when you  
17 first began to contact these people to try to get to -- to  
18 try to put together a voluntary unit?

19 A. The initial contacts were started in December of  
20 '89, and I worked on them probably until June of '90, on  
21 the initial contacts.

22 Q. Is Exhibit 3 an example of the correspondence  
23 that you received in this case from Texaco after your  
24 attempts to contact them to put together a unit?

25 A. Yes, it is.

1 Q. After June of 1990, do you know what contacts  
2 were made with working interest owners in order to form a  
3 voluntary unit?

4 A. Yes, the initial -- I did the initial mineral  
5 takeoff on the area, and then we had the law firm of Lynch,  
6 Chappell do a formal title opinion, and the rest of the  
7 lease inquiries were handled internally by Strata.

8 Q. Let me have you look at what we've marked as  
9 Exhibit 4. Is that an example of the letters which Strata  
10 sent out enclosing AFE's for the working interest owners in  
11 the northeast quarter?

12 A. Yes, it is. They had a chance to either lease  
13 or participate for their prorata share.

14 Q. In your opinion, Mr. Thorsen, did Strata Energy  
15 Resources make a good faith effort to form a voluntary unit  
16 prior to applying to the New Mexico Oil Conservation  
17 division for a pooling order?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. Let me have you look now at what's been marked  
20 as Exhibit 5, which is a copy of the AFE for this well. Do  
21 you know whether or not that AFE was sent out in November  
22 of 1990 to working interest owners in an attempt to form a  
23 voluntary unit?

24 A. Yes, it was along with the a survey plat for the  
25 proposed well.



1 Q. And Mr. Jeff Smith who is the geologist here  
2 today will testify about the AFE; is that correct?

3 A. That is correct.

4 Q. Exhibit No. 6 is a tabulation of ownership in  
5 the northeast quarter, and there are -- there is an  
6 indication of a "yes" and "no" down the columns. Could  
7 you -- without going through each one of these people,  
8 could you review briefly for the examiner and explain  
9 whether or not to your knowledge certain people have leased  
10 and there are some other people who need to be pooled?

11 A. Well, we have at this time approximately 74  
12 percent of the mineral ownership under lease. The other  
13 particular mineral owners were under -- the bulk of them  
14 were under a Thompson Estate that had not been leased since  
15 1943. After we tried to locate the bulk of them, we had an  
16 additional record search done by Caprock Title, then we  
17 came up with the bulk of the Thompson heirs, and they were  
18 asked to participate or lease. And like I say,  
19 approximately 23 percent of the mineral owners did not  
20 reply to our letters.

21 Q. There are some names listed on Exhibit 6 which  
22 show no address. Can you review for the examiner what  
23 efforts Strata or you made in order to obtain addresses for  
24 these people?

25 A. Well, initially we did check the abstracts, the

1 tax office rolls at Lea County and the surrounding counties  
2 of Gaines, Texas and Andrews County, Texas. We searched  
3 the address files at the various abstract companies. Any  
4 followup leads or something we did try to send letters or  
5 call. There were no particular probates filed on any of  
6 these people we looked for, so with the length of time that  
7 went by, we just couldn't locate them.

8 Q. Have either you or Strata been trying to contact  
9 these people since roughly the beginning of 1990?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. In your opinion has Strata made a diligent  
12 effort to obtain addresses for these people and give them  
13 notice of this hearing?

14 A. Yes, they have.

15 Q. The last page of Exhibit 6 shows 26.99 percent  
16 working interest to be pooled, is that -- is that a current  
17 tabulation as of today as far as you know?

18 A. We did receive one operating agreement from a  
19 Ronald Byers that had a small interest, so it will be a  
20 little less than that.

21 Q. This tabulation shows the interest across the  
22 160; is that correct?

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. The interests, as you understand it, are  
25 undivided so that interest would be proportionately the

1 same in the 40-acre tract; is that right?

2 A. There were approximately 66 different mineral  
3 owners in this, under the northeast quarter.

4 Q. Let me have you look down at Exhibit No. 7,  
5 which is an operating agreement. Do you know whether or  
6 not this operating agreement has been proposed to any  
7 working interest owners?

8 A. Yes, it has.

9 Q. As of today has it been signed as far as you  
10 know?

11 A. The only one that I know of that we just  
12 received confirmation on was from Ronald Byers.

13 Q. Mr. Thorsen, have you reviewed Exhibits 1  
14 through 7 and are they correct and accurate to your  
15 understanding?

16 A. Yes, they are.

17 MS. AUBREY: Mr. Examiner, I offer Exhibits 1 through  
18 7, and I have no further questions of Mr. Thorsen at this  
19 time.

20 MR. STOVALL: Exhibits 1 through 7 will be admitted  
21 into evidence.

22 (Strata Energy Exhibits 1 through 7  
23 were admitted in evidence.)

24 EXAMINATION

25 BY EXAMINER STOGNER:

1 Q. In looking at Exhibit No. 6, Mr. Thorsen,  
2 whenever I look at your tabulation there, "lease on file,"  
3 "yes," "no," the ones that have yes, am I to assume -- I'm  
4 not to assume that they have signed your operating  
5 agreement?

6 A. No. We do have an oil and gas lease from those  
7 particular people.

8 Q. So you have actually signed a lease and they  
9 have leased to you?

10 A. Yes, sir.

11 Q. Now, looking at the end of this, it's not  
12 exactly a hundred percent. Do you want to address that?

13 A. We just took it out, the decimal interest out,  
14 to five places.

15 Q. Now, as far as the people who are shown as not  
16 leased, have there been any of these that you have had  
17 contact with and refused to sign, or are all these you  
18 haven't had contact with?

19 A. We have had contact and we do have receipts  
20 showing that also.

21 Q. But have you had verbal contact and they said,  
22 "No, we're not going to lease to you. We don't want to  
23 join this"?

24 A. No, sir.

25 Q. When did you start working on this project?

1 A. I started working on this September of '89.

2 Q. And your -- Exhibit No. 4 is the letter in which  
3 it was sent to the parties listed on 6; is that correct?

4 A. Yes, sir, that's correct. And this was  
5 following our formal title opinion. We tried to get a  
6 little closer edge on the mineral owners. We couldn't find  
7 out, and this was a followup to my initial letters. So, in  
8 fact, some of these people had been contacted or sent a  
9 letter at least twice.

10 EXAMINER STOGNER: Has the rates of overhead charges  
11 been covered, Miss Aubrey?

12 MS. AUBREY: I was going to discuss that with  
13 Mr. Smith.

14 EXAMINER STOGNER: In that case, I don't have any  
15 other questions of this witness.

16 MR. STOVALL: I have nothing.

17 EXAMINER STOGNER: Mr. Thorsen, you may be excused.  
18 Miss Aubrey.

19 MS. AUBREY: Call Jeff Smith.

20 JEFFREY SMITH,  
21 the witness herein, having been first duly sworn, was  
22 examined and testified as follows:

23 DIRECT EXAMINATION

24 BY MS. AUBREY:

25 Q. Would you state your name for the record,

1 please?

2 A. Jeffrey Smith.

3 Q. How are you employed?

4 A. I'm a consulting geologist.

5 Q. Where do you work?

6 A. I'm on a full-time retainer to Strata Energy  
7 Resources as exploration manager.

8 Q. Where is your office located, Mr. Smith?

9 A. Midland, Texas.

10 Q. Have you testified previously before the New  
11 Mexico Oil Conservation Division?

12 A. Actually I've thought about that. I think I  
13 have, but I'm not a hundred percent positive. I've  
14 attended hearings about 20 years ago, but I don't remember  
15 if I testified here or just railroad commission.

16 Q. Why don't you review your educational background  
17 and your work background for the examiner then?

18 A. I have a bachelor's degree in geology that I  
19 received in 1968 from the Union College in Schenectady, New  
20 York. I have a master's degree in geology from Rensselaer  
21 Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York. I was employed by  
22 Mobile Oil in Midland from 1970 to 1973; Midwest Oil from  
23 1973 to 1974; Signal Oil & Gas from 1974 to 1977; Texas Oil  
24 & Gas from 1977 through 1978; Resources Investment  
25 Corporation from 1978 to 1980; I was -- for the following

1 four years 1980 to 1984 I was partner and vice president of  
2 Harvard Petroleum Corporation. I've been independent since  
3 that time.

4 Q. Are you familiar with the application of Strata  
5 Energy Resources Corporation for compulsory pooling that  
6 we're hearing today?

7 A. Yes, I am.

8 MS. AUBREY: Mr. Examiner, I tender Mr. Smith as an  
9 expert in petroleum geology.

10 EXAMINER STOGNER: Mr. Smith, is so qualified.

11 Q. (By Ms. Aubrey) Mr. Smith, would you refer to  
12 Exhibit No. 5, which is the AFE that was sent out in  
13 November of 1990 to the working interest owners. Have you  
14 seen that before?

15 A. Yes, I have.

16 Q. And have you reviewed the entries on this AFE?

17 A. Yes, I have.

18 Q. Are you familiar with the costs of drilling a  
19 well to the Abo formation to approximately 7800 feet?

20 A. Yes, I am.

21 Q. In your opinion, Mr. Smith, does this AFE  
22 represent a fair and reasonable estimate of the cost of  
23 drilling such a well?

24 A. I think the AFE is understated by approximately  
25 50 to \$60,000.

1 Q. So you think it ought to be actually higher?

2 A. Yes, I do.

3 Q. Has Strata drilled and completed any other wells  
4 in the area?

5 A. Yes, approximately half a dozen.

6 Q. What is the range of cost on those wells?

7 A. The range of cost on those wells is roughly what  
8 you see on this AFE, and that's why this cost was reflected  
9 on this AFE. There are several arithmetic errors on this  
10 AFE, and there some things that have significantly changed.  
11 The wells that were drilled in the past had used tubulars.  
12 We are unable to secure used tubulars at this time. We  
13 anticipate probably about 40,000 additional cost on our  
14 casing and tubing program. We will have to go with all  
15 new.

16 Q. This AFE includes costs using used tubing; is  
17 that right?

18 A. Yes, it does. This is reflective of used  
19 tubulars.

20 Q. Are you familiar with the any deadlines which  
21 Strata Energy Resources has for spudding this well?

22 A. Yes, in order to preserve the tax allocations  
23 for a number of the investors, we have a spud date I  
24 believe of March 15 that we are pressured to.

25 Q. And is Strata Energy Resources asking the



1 examiner, if he can, to expedite this order so that you can  
2 receive it in time to spud?

3 A. Most definitely.

4 EXAMINER STOGNER: Did you say March 15 or February  
5 15?

6 MS. AUBREY: March 15.

7 THE WITNESS: March 15.

8 Q. (By Ms. Aubrey) Are you familiar with the  
9 surface of this particular 40-acre tract and the one  
10 160-acre tract that will be dedicated?

11 A. Yes, I am.

12 Q. Could you describe any peculiarities about the  
13 surface for the examiner?

14 A. It's probably the only piece of land within a  
15 hundred miles that is under irrigation.

16 Q. Has that caused Strata additional problems in  
17 dealing with landowners and surface owners?

18 A. With the surface particularly, yes.

19 Q. Let me have you look down at Exhibit No. 8,  
20 which is a structure map. Have you reviewed this map and  
21 are you familiar with this?

22 A. Yes, I am.

23 Q. What's your contour interval on this map?

24 A. Contour interval here is 25 feet. This map was  
25 constructed at the top of the Abo shale.

1 Q. In your opinion as a geologist, is structure  
2 controlling in whether or not you achieve commercial  
3 production in this well?

4 A. Our empirical evidence here leads us to believe  
5 that structure is probably of minor significance. Porosity  
6 and permeability and stratigraphic phenomena are far more  
7 the key to commercial reliability.

8 Q. In this analysis what porosity cutoff did you  
9 use?

10 A. Typically employed an 8 percent cutoff.

11 Q. Do you know how far away the proposed location  
12 is from the nearest Abo oil production?

13 A. Yes, it's almost exactly half a mile.

14 Q. How far away from commercial gas production is  
15 this well?

16 A. Over two miles.

17 Q. In what formation is that well?

18 A. That's in the Yates in 7 Rivers.

19 Q. Is that an objective formation of this well?

20 A. Yes, it is.

21 Q. Strata Energy Resources has asked the examiner  
22 to impose the maximum risk factor penalty in this case.  
23 Can you give me the examiner your justification for that  
24 request?

25 A. Yes. I think there's some substantial inherent

1 risk to the project. There are probably at least a dozen  
2 Abo wells in this immediate vicinity that have been drilled  
3 at various vintages. Very few dry holes but also very few  
4 commercial producers. There are only a couple of  
5 commercial wells, and great many clearly noncommercial  
6 wells. The risk is not so much as to dry hole. The risk  
7 is more to economic value. And we think that we are  
8 interested in the area because we're trying to enhance a  
9 completion technique, but it still hasn't proven itself and  
10 there is substantial risk.

11 Q. Who is Strata Energy Resources asking be  
12 designated as operator of this well?

13 A. Asking LBO New Mexico Corp. to be designated as  
14 operator, as a wholly owned subsidiary for operating  
15 purposes of Strata Energy.

16 Q. What rates are you asking for overhead drilling  
17 and producing the well?

18 A. I believe it's 5,000 for drilling well rate and  
19 500 for producing well rate.

20 Q. Do you know, Mr. Smith, whether or not that is  
21 the amount that is contained in the operating agreement  
22 which is Exhibit No. 7?

23 A. I don't know if -- for 100 percent fact, but I  
24 think it is. That's my recollection.

25 Q. Do you have an opinion as a petroleum geologist

1 as to whether or not those are fair and reasonable rates  
2 for overhead well drilling and producing a well?

3 A. I think that's compatible with the criteria that  
4 Ernst has developed.

5 Q. Was Exhibit 8 either prepared by you or reviewed  
6 by you for accuracy?

7 A. I reviewed it, yes.

8 MS. AUBREY: Mr. Examiner, I tender Exhibit No. 8.

9 EXAMINER STOGNER: Exhibit No. 8 will be admitted into  
10 evidence.

11 (Strata Energy Exhibit 8 was  
12 admitted in evidence.)

13 Q. (By Ms. Aubrey) Mr. Smith, will granting Strata  
14 Energy Resources application promote conservation, prevent  
15 waste and protect correlative rights?

16 A. Yes, on both counts.

17 MS. AUBREY: I have no more questions of Mr. Smith at  
18 this time.

19 EXAMINATION

20 BY EXAMINER STOGNER:

21 Q. Mr. Smith, what was the -- who would the  
22 operator be again?

23 A. It's LBO New Mexico, Incorporated.

24 Q. And that will be the name that the plugging bond  
25 is under?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. LBO. Leonard, Boy and Over?

3 A. We were trying to find a name and we happened to  
4 be looking at the Wall Street Journal and saw a headline  
5 about leveraged buyouts. We decided no one else had that  
6 name.

7 Q. No irrigation within a hundred miles with the  
8 exception over in Texas; is that correct?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. And a cemetery to the north.

11 MR. STOVALL: I have some questions.

12 EXAMINATION

13 BY MR. STOVALL:

14 Q. What have you done with the landowner with  
15 respect to that irrigation? How have you resolved that?

16 A. I'm not qualified to answer that, sir. The  
17 owner of the company has made necessary contacts with the  
18 surface owners.

19 Q. Did you say that you -- you have reviewed the  
20 AFE; is that correct?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. And you have indicated there is some  
23 mathematical errors in it?

24 A. Yes, on column number 3, drilling rig, day rate  
25 is 4500, footage rate 1375. The secretary that tabulated

1 this for us, we expect four days of day work and she did  
2 not add in the day work. She just simply multiplied  
3 projected total depth by 1375 a foot to arrive at a total  
4 number. Also on a column, drilling overhead/communication  
5 we inadvertently transposed it as 12,000, that's supposed  
6 to be 2,000, so that was overstated. And on our completion  
7 costs, everything was estimated, as I said before, based on  
8 access to used tubulars which we have been unable to  
9 secure.

10 Q. You understand that forced pooling orders  
11 require that an AFE be sent to those parties who are forced  
12 pool subsequent to the order, and they be given 30 days to  
13 respond to prepay their costs?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. Is that correct? And in this case I would  
16 strongly suggest, since you have a -- on the record as  
17 having this as an inaccurate AFE and could lead to  
18 erroneous information for decision making; that you be  
19 sure to follow that provision. You as the operator be sure  
20 to follow that provision of the order to insure the parties  
21 that are forced pool in by the order have at least as  
22 accurate as you can make this for their decision?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 MR. STOVALL: I don't have anything further.

25 MS. AUBREY: Mr. Examiner, our certificates of mailing

1 and the original copies of the postal service green cards  
2 have been tendered as Exhibit No. 1.

3 EXAMINER STOGNER: Thank you.

4 MR. STOVALL: Miss Aubrey, with respect to that, I  
5 notice that there are a number of certified mail receipts  
6 and no return cards.

7 MS. AUBREY: There are three or four that we do not  
8 have green cards for yet.

9 EXAMINER STOGNER: Does anybody else have anything  
10 further in Case 10235? If not, this case will be taken  
11 under advisement.

12 (Whereupon, the hearing was concluded at the  
13 approximate hour of 11:50 a.m.)

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO )  
2 ) ss.  
3 COUNTY OF SANTA FE )


4 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

5 I, Susan G. Ptacek, a Certified Court Reporter and  
6 Notary Public, do HEREBY CERTIFY that I stenographically  
7 reported the proceedings before the Oil Conservation  
8 Division, and that the foregoing is a true, complete and  
9 accurate transcript of the proceedings of said hearing as  
10 appears from my stenographic notes so taken and transcribed  
11 under my personal supervision.

12 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not related to nor  
13 employed by any of the parties hereto, and have no interest  
14 in the outcome thereof.

15 DATED at Santa Fe, New Mexico, this 11th day of March,  
16 1991.

17  
18 My Commission Expires:  
19 December 10, 1993

  
SUSAN G. PTACEK  
Certified Court Reporter  
Notary Public

20  
21 I do hereby certify that the foregoing is  
22 a complete record of the proceedings in  
23 the Examiner hearing of Case No. 10235  
24 heard by me on 7 February 1991.

  
Examiner  
Oil Conservation Division