

**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. 12011  
Order No. R-11032**

**APPLICATION OF STRATA PRODUCTION  
COMPANY FOR COMPULSORY POOLING,  
LEA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO.**

**ORDER OF THE DIVISION**

**BY THE DIVISION:**

This case came on for hearing at 8:15 a.m. on July 23 and August 6, 1998, at Santa Fe, New Mexico, before Examiners David R. Catanach and Michael E. Stogner, respectively.

NOW, on this 19<sup>th</sup> day of August, 1998, the Division Director, having considered the testimony, the record, and the recommendations of the Examiner,

**FINDS THAT:**

(1) Due public notice having been given, the Division has jurisdiction of this case and its subject matter.

(2) The applicant, Strata Production Company, seeks an order pooling all mineral interests in all formations developed on 320-acre spacing underlying the W/2 of Section 22, Township 22 South, Range 32 East, NMPM, Lea County, New Mexico, which presently include but are not necessarily limited to the Undesignated East Red Tank-Morrow Gas Pool. This unit is to be dedicated to the applicant's proposed Hill Federal Well No. 1 to be drilled at a standard gas well location 1980 feet from the South and West lines (Unit K) of Section 22.

(3) The applicant has the right to drill and proposes to drill its Hill Federal Well No. 1 at the standard gas well location described above.

(4) Exxon Corporation, the only interest owner in the proposed proration unit who has not agreed to pool its interest, appeared at the hearing through legal counsel.

(5) Subsequent to the presentation of evidence and testimony by the applicant at the July 23<sup>rd</sup> hearing, this case was continued at the request of Exxon Corporation to allow the parties additional time to attempt to reach a voluntary agreement concerning the development of the subject acreage.

(6) At the August 6<sup>th</sup> hearing, legal counsel for Exxon Corporation appeared and stated that Exxon's interest in the subject proration unit has been sold to Mr. Robert E. Landreth, who is aware of the ongoing pooling proceedings.

(7) To avoid the drilling of unnecessary wells, to protect correlative rights, to prevent waste, and to afford to the owner of each interest in the unit the opportunity to recover or receive without unnecessary expense its just and fair share of the production in any pool completion resulting from this order, this application should be approved by pooling all mineral interests, whatever they may be, within the unit.

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

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

(10) Any non-consenting working interest owner who does not pay its share of estimated well costs should have withheld from production its share of reasonable well costs plus an additional 200 percent thereof as a reasonable charge for the risk involved in the drilling of the well.

(11) Any non-consenting working 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.

(12) Following determination of reasonable well costs, any non-consenting working interest owner who has paid its 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.

(13) The applicant proposed that overhead rates of \$7600.00 per month while drilling and \$775.00 per month while producing be adopted in this case.

(14) Applicant's proposed overhead rates are considerably higher than those contained within the 1997-1998 Ernst & Young LLP Fixed-Rate Overhead Survey. The applicant did not provide sufficient justification for its proposed overhead rates and therefore, these rates should be fixed at a more reasonable amount.

(15) Reasonable charges for supervision (combined fixed rates) should be fixed at \$6041.00 per month while drilling and \$686.00 per month while producing. The operator should be authorized to withhold from production the proportionate share of both the supervision charges and the actual expenditures required for operating the well, not in excess of what are reasonable, attributable to each non-consenting working interest.

(16) All proceeds from production from the well that 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.

(17) If the operator of the pooled unit fails to commence drilling the well to which the unit is dedicated on or before November 15, 1998, or if all the parties to this forced pooling reach voluntary agreement subsequent to entry of this order, this order should become null and void and of no effect whatsoever.

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

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:**

(1) All mineral interests, whatever they may be, are hereby pooled in all formations developed on 320-acre spacing underlying the W/2 of Section 22, Township 22 South, Range 32 East, NMPM, Lea County, New Mexico, which presently include but are not necessarily limited to the Undesignated East Red Tank-Morrow Gas Pool. This unit shall be dedicated to the applicant's Hill Federal Well No. 1 to be drilled at a standard gas well location 1980 feet from the South and West lines (Unit K) of Section 22.

PROVIDED HOWEVER THAT, the operator of the unit shall commence drilling the well on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1998, and shall thereafter continue drilling the well with due diligence to a depth sufficient to test the Morrow formation.

PROVIDED FURTHER THAT, in the event the operator does not commence drilling the well on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> day of November, 1998, Ordering Paragraph (1) shall be null and void and of no effect whatsoever, unless the operator obtains a time extension from the Division Director for good cause shown.

PROVIDED FURTHER THAT, should the well not be drilled to completion or abandoned within 120 days after commencement thereof, the operator shall appear before the Division Director and show cause why Ordering Paragraph (1) should not be rescinded.

(2) Strata Production Company is hereby designated the operator of the well and unit.

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

(4) Within 30 days from the date the schedule of estimated well costs is furnished, any non-consenting working interest owner shall have the right to pay its share of estimated well costs to the operator in lieu of paying its share of reasonable well costs out of production, and any such owner who pays its 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 the schedule, the actual well costs shall be the reasonable well costs; provided, however, that if there is an objection to actual well costs within the 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 its share of estimated well costs in advance as provided above shall pay to the operator its share of the amount that reasonable well costs exceed estimated well costs and shall receive from the operator its 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 proportionate share of reasonable well costs attributable to each non-consenting working interest owner who has not paid its 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 drilling the well, an additional 200 percent of such costs.

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

(9) Reasonable charges for supervision (combined fixed rates) are hereby fixed at \$6041.00 per month while drilling and \$686.00 per month while producing. The operator is hereby authorized to withhold from production the proportionate share of both the supervision charges and the actual expenditures required for operating the 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 this order.

(11) Any well costs or charges that 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 well that are not disbursed for any reason shall immediately be placed in escrow in Lea 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 the escrow agent within 30 days from the date of first deposit with the escrow agent.

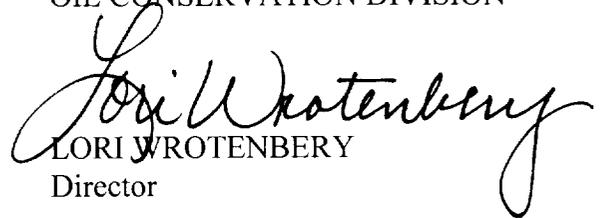
(13) Should all the parties to this forced pooling order reach voluntary agreement subsequent to entry of this order, this order shall thereafter be of no further effect.

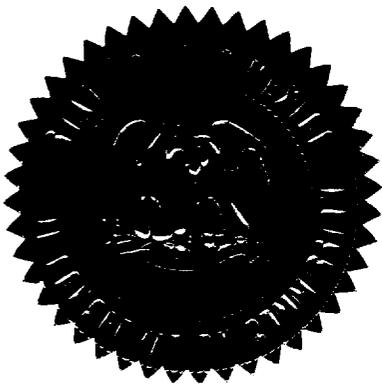
(14) The operator of the well and unit shall notify the Division in writing of the subsequent voluntary agreement of all parties subject to the forced pooling provisions of this order.

(15) Jurisdiction is hereby 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

  
LORI WROTENBERY  
Director



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