STATE OF NEW MEXICO OIL CONSERVATION COMMISSION

APPLICATION OF NEW MEXICO OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION TO AMEND 19.15.5 NMAC; STATEWIDE

CASE NO. <u>20895</u>

NEW MEXICO OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION'S APPLICATION TO AMEND 19.15.5 NMAC

The New Mexico Oil Conservation Division ("OCD") hereby applies to the Oil Conservation Commission to amend 19.15.5 NMAC – *Compliance and Enforcement*. The OCD proposes to amend the following provisions:

- (1) 19.15.5.3 NMAC to add the legal authority in Section 70-2-31 NMSA 1978;
- (2) 19.15.5.8 NMAC to state the duties and obligations of the OCD;
- (3) 19.15.5.9 NMAC to reorganize the section and remove superfluous language; and
- (4) 19.5.5.10 NMAC to describe the OCD's enforcement authority and the procedures that the OCD will follow to issue and adjudicate notices of violation and temporary cessation orders.

A draft of the proposed amendments and a legal notice of publication are attached as Exhibits A and B, respectively.

Respectfully submitted,

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This is an amendment to 19.15.5 NMAC, amending Sections 3, 8, 9 and 10 effective x/xx/xxxx. Explanatory statement: Statute citations were corrected throughout the rule to conform to correct legislative styles.

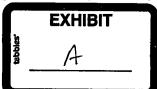
- **19.15.5.3 STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** 19.15.5 NMAC is adopted pursuant to the Oil and Gas Act, Section 70-2-6, Section 70-2-11, [and] Section 70-2-12 and Section 70-2-31 NMSA 1978. [19.15.5.3 NMAC N, 12/1/2008, A, X/XX/XXXX]
- 19.15.5.8 ENFORCEMENT OF STATUTES AND RULES: The division is charged with the duty and obligation of enforcing the state's rules and statutes relating to the conservation of oil and gas, including the prevention of waste and the protection of correlative rights, and [including] the protection of public health and the environment. An owner or operator shall obtain information pertaining to the regulation of oil and gas before beginning operations.

[19.15.5.8 NMAC - Rp, 19.15.1.12 NMAC, 12/1/2008, A, X/XX/XXXX]

19.15.5.9 **COMPLIANCE:**

- A. An operator is in compliance with Subsection A of 19.15.5.9 NMAC if the operator:
 - (1) currently meets the financial assurance requirements of 19.15.8 NMAC;
- (2) is not subject to a division or commission order, issued after notice and hearing, finding the operator to be in violation of an order requiring corrective action;
- does not have a penalty assessment that is unpaid more than [70] 30 days after issuance of the order assessing the penalty; and
- has no more than the following number of wells out of compliance with 19.15.25.8 NMAC that are not subject to an agreed compliance or final order setting a schedule for bringing the wells into compliance with 19.15.25.8 NMAC and imposing sanctions if the schedule is not met:
- (a) two wells or fifty percent of the wells the operator operates, whichever is less, if the operator operates 100 wells or less;
 - (b) five wells if the operator operates between 101 and 500 wells;
 - (c) seven wells if the operator operates between 501 and 1000 wells; and
 - (d) 10 wells if the operator operates more than 1000 wells.
- [B. The division shall notify an operator on a monthly basis when, according to records on file with the division, a well on the inactive well list described in Subsection F of 19.15.5.9 NMAC shows no production or injection for the past 12 months by making such information available on the division's website. Further, at least 60 days prior to commencing an enforcement action against an operator for a violation of 19.15.5.9 NMAC, the division shall notify the operator by first class mail to the address provided to the division pursuant to Subsection C of 19.15.9.8 NMAC.
- C. The division shall make available on its website and update weekly the status of operators' financial assurance 19.15.8 NMAC requires, according to division records.
- D. Orders requiring corrective action.
- (1) The division shall make available on its website division or commission orders, issued after notice and hearing, finding an operator to be in violation of an order requiring corrective action.
- (2) An operator who contests an order finding it to be in violation of an order requiring corrective action may appeal and may seek a stay of the order. An order that is stayed pending appeal does not affect an operator's compliance with Subsection A of 19.15.5.9 NMAC.
- (3) An operator who completes the corrective action the order requires may file a motion with the order's issuer to declare the order satisfied. The division or commission, as applicable, may grant the motion without hearing, or may set the matter for hearing.
- E. Penalty assessments.

- F] B. Inactive wells.
- (1) The division shall make available on its website, and update daily, an "inactive well list" listing each well, by operator, that according to division records:
 - (a) shows no production or injection for past 15 months;



[(a)] (b) does not have its well bore plugged in accordance with 19.15.25.9 NMAC through 19.15.25.11 NMAC;
[(b)] (c) is not in approved temporary abandonment in accordance with 19.15.25.12

NMAC through 19.15.25.14 NMAC; and

[(e)] (d) is not subject to an agreed compliance or <u>final</u> order setting a schedule for bringing the well into compliance with 19.15.25.8 NMAC [and imposing sanctions if the operator does not meet the schedule].

- (2) [For purposes of 19.15.5.9 NMAC, the listing of a well on the division's inactive well list as a] A well inactive for more than [one year plus 90 days] 15 months creates a rebuttable presumption that the well is out of compliance with 19.15.25.8 NMAC.
- C. Financial assurance. The division shall make available on its website and update weekly the status of operators' financial assurance that 19.15.8 NMAC requires, according to division records.

 [19.15.5.9 NMAC Rp, 19.15.1.40 NMAC, 12/1/2008; A, 11/30/2016, A, xx/xx/xxxx]

\mathbf{A} . The provisions in 19.15.4 NMAC applicable to adjudicatory proceedings shall apply to
compliance proceedings unless altered or amended by 19.15.5.10 NMAC.
B. A compliance proceeding is an adjudicatory proceeding in which the division seeks an order
imposing sanctions for violation of a provision of the Oil and Gas Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 70 2 1 through 70 2-
38 or a provision of a rule or order issued pursuant to the act. Such sanctions may include but are not limited to:
(1) requiring compliance with a provision of the Oil and Gas Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 70
2 1 through 70 2 38 or a provision of a rule or order issued pursuant to the act;
(2) assessment of civil penalties pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 70-2-31(A); Subsection A
of Section 70-2-31 NMSA 1978;

[COMPLIANCE PROCEEDINGS:] ENFORCEMENT:

corrective action including but not limited to abatement or remediation of contamination

- (5) denial, cancellation or suspension of a permit;
 - (6) denial, cancellation or suspension of authorization to transport; or
 - (7) shutting in a well or wells.

19.15.5.10

- C. The division initiates an administrative compliance proceeding by filing a written application with the division clerk:
- (1) identifying the operator and any other responsible parties against whom the order is sought; including the surety if the division seeks an order allowing forfeiture of a surety bond;
- (2) identifying the provision of the Oil and Gas Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 70-2-1 through 70-2-38, or the provision of the rule or order issued pursuant to the act, allegedly violated;
- (3) providing a general description of the facts supporting the allegations;
- (4) stating the sanction or sanctions sought; and
- (5) providing proposed legal notice.

 D. The division shall provide notice of compliance proceedings as follows:
- (1) the division shall publish notice in accordance with 19.15.4.9 NMAC.
- (2) the division shall provide notice to the operator and any other responsible parties against whom the compliance order is sought by following the provisions of 19.15.4.12 NMAC.
- E. The director may enter into an agreed compliance order with an entity against whom compliance is sought to resolve alleged violations of any provision of the Oil and Gas Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 70.2.1 through 70.2.38 or any provision of any rule or order issued pursuant to the act. The director may enter into an agreed compliance order prior to or after the filing of an application for an administrative compliance proceeding. An agreed compliance order shall have the same force and effect as a compliance order issued after an adjudicatory hearing.
- F. Nothing in 19.15.5.10 NMAC precludes the division from bringing other actions provided for in the Oil and Gas Act, NMSA 1978, Sections 70.2.1 through 70.2.38, including but not limited to the following: suit for indemnification pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 70.2.14(E) or NMSA 1978, Section 70.2.38(B); an action through the attorney general with respect to the forfeiture of illegal oil or illegal gas pursuant to NMSA 1978,

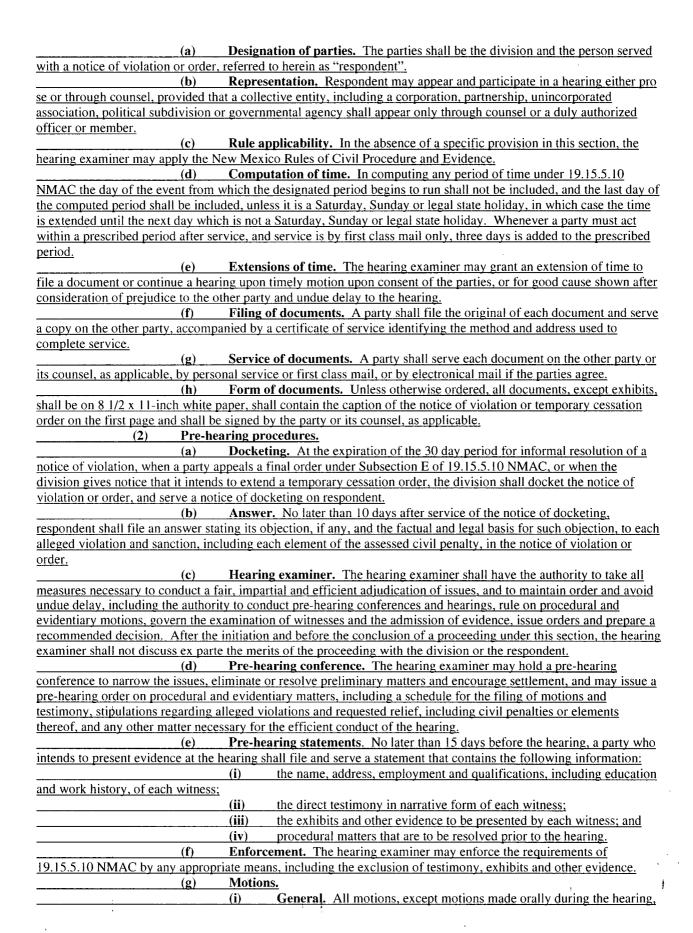
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Section 70-2-32; an injunction under NMSA 1978, Section 70-2-28; or collection of penalties pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 70-2-31(A). [19.15.5.10 NMAC Rp, 19.15.14.1227 NMAC, 12/1/2008] General. Whenever the division determines that a person violated or is violating the Oil and Gas Act or a provision of any rule, order, permit or authorization issued pursuant to the Oil and Gas Act, the division may seek a sanction by: **(1)** issuing a temporary cessation order if it determines that the alleged violation is causing or will cause an imminent danger to public health or safety or a significant imminent environmental harm. The temporary cessation order shall remain in place until the earlier of when the division determines that the alleged violation is abated or 30 days, unless a hearing is held before the division and a new order is issued; **(2)** issuing a notice of violation; or **(3)** commencing a civil action in district court. В. **Sanctions.** The division may seek one or more of the following sanctions: **(1)** a civil penalty: **(2)** modification, suspension, cancellation or termination of a permit or authorization; **(3)** plugging and abandonment of a well; **(4)** remediation and restoration of a well location and associated facilities, including the removal of surface and subsurface equipment and other materials; **(5)** remediation and restoration of a location affected by a spill or release; **(6)** forfeiture of financial assurance; shutting in a well or wells; and **(7)** any other remedy authorized by law. **(8)** C. Notice of violation. **(1)** A notice of violation issued by the division shall state with reasonable specificity: (a) the identity of the alleged violator; **(b)** the nature of the alleged violation, including the provision of the Oil and Gas Act or rule, order, permit or authorization allegedly violated; whether compliance is required immediately or within a specified time period; (c) (d) the sanction(s) available for the alleged violation and the sanction(s) proposed by the division; (e) the availability of a process for informal review and resolution of the alleged violation; **(f)** a statement that if the notice of violation is not informally resolved within 30 days of service, the division will hold a hearing; and the date of the hearing, which shall be no later than 90 days after the date of the notice of violation. **(2)** The division shall serve the notice of violation on the alleged violator by certified mail. If during the informal review the division and the alleged violator agree to resolve the alleged violation, they shall incorporate their agreement into a stipulated final order signed by both parties. The stipulated final order shall state that the alleged violator admits the division's jurisdiction to file the notice of violation, consents to the specified relief, including the civil penalty, if any, and waives the alleged violator's right of review by the commission. If the division and the alleged violator fail to enter a stipulated final order within 30 days **(4)** of service, the division shall hold a hearing at the division's principal office. Civil penalties. The division shall calculate a proposed civil penalty for each alleged violation in the notice of violation. The calculation shall account for the seriousness of the violation, good faith efforts to comply with the applicable requirement, history of noncompliance under the Oil and Gas Act and other relevant factors. The civil penalty assessed by the division shall not exceed \$2,500 per day of noncompliance for each alleged violation, unless the alleged violation presents a risk either to the health or safety of the public or of causing significant environmental harm, or unless the noncompliance continues beyond the time specified in the notice of

<u>E. Adjudicatory procedures.</u> These adjudicatory procedures shall apply to hearings on temporary cessation orders and notices of violation before the division, and the provisions of 19.15.4 NMAC shall not apply.

violation or stipulated final order, whereupon the civil penalty may not exceed \$10,000 per day of noncompliance for each alleged violation, provided that the civil penalty assessed by the division for an alleged violation shall not

(1) General provisions.



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shall be in writing, specify the grounds for the motion, state the relief sought, indicate whether the motion is opposed or unopposed and be served on the other party. (ii) Unopposed motions. An unopposed motion shall state that concurrence of the other party was obtained and shall be accompanied by a proposed order approved by the parties. (iii) **Opposed motions.** An opposed motion shall state either that concurrence was sought and not obtained, or the reason that concurrence was not sought. **Response.** No later than 10 days after service of an opposed motion, (iv) the opposing party may file a response. Failure to file a response shall be deemed a waiver of any objection to the granting of the motion. Reply. No later than 10 days after service of a response to an opposed (v) motion, the moving party may file a reply. (vi) **Decision.** The hearing examiner shall decide all motions without a hearing, unless otherwise ordered by the hearing examiner sua sponte or upon written request of a party. Hearing procedures. General. The hearing examiner shall admit all evidence, unless he or she determines that the evidence is irrelevant, immaterial, unduly repetitious or otherwise unreliable or of little probative value. Evidence relating to settlement that would be excluded by the New Mexico Rules of Evidence is not admissible. Witness examination. Witnesses shall be examined orally and under oath or affirmation, provided that the parties may stipulate to the admission of the testimony of a witness, or part thereof. Parties shall have the right to cross-examine a witness, provided that the hearing examiner may limit crossexamination that is unduly repetitious, harassing or beyond the scope of the direct testimony. **Exhibits.** A party shall label each exhibit used during the hearing or offered (c) into evidence with a designation identifying the party, the witness using or offering the exhibit and a serial number. **Burden of persuasion.** The division has the burden of going forward with the (d) evidence and of proving by a preponderance of the evidence the facts relied upon to show the alleged violation occurred and that the proposed civil penalty is appropriate. Following the establishment of a prima facie case, respondent shall have the burden of going forward with any adverse evidence or defense to the allegations. Post-hearing procedures. **(4) Transcript.** The hearing shall be transcribed verbatim. Respondent may order (a) a copy of the transcript from the reporter at its own expense. **(b) Recommended decision.** The director may request that the hearing examiner prepare a recommended decision. Final order. The director shall file a final order addressing the material issues (c) of fact and law and may assess a sanction for each alleged violation, which shall be served on the division and the respondent. F. Commission review. No later than 30 days after the director serves the final order, a party may file a notice of appeal with the commission and shall serve the notice of appeal on the other party. The commission shall schedule a hearing on the appeal and notify the parties of the date and time of the hearing. The commission may appoint a hearing examiner, who may be a member of the commission. The commission shall conduct a de novo review, provided however, that the parties may stipulate to the issues to be heard and to the admission of all or part of the record before the division. The commission shall conduct the hearing in accordance with the adjudicatory procedures in Paragraph (1), Subparagraphs (c) through (g) of Paragraph (2). Paragraph (3) and Subparagraph (a) of Paragraph (4) of Subsection E of 19.15.5.10 NMAC, **Payment of civil penalty.** No later than 30 days after the director serves the final order, respondent shall pay the full amount of the civil penalty assessed in the final order, provided however that if respondent files a notice of appeal to the commission, no later than 30 days after the commission files a final order or the appeal is withdrawn, respondent shall pay the full amount of the civil penalty assessed in the final order. Resolution after commencement of hearing. If the parties agree to resolve a notice of violation at any time after the commencement of a hearing, they shall file a stipulated final order signed by both parties. The stipulated final order shall state that respondent admits the division's jurisdiction to file the notice of violation. consents to the specified relief, including the civil penalty, if any, and waives respondent's right of review by the commission or the court, as applicable. **Publication.** On or about October 1 of each year, the division shall publish a list identifying the temporary cessation orders and notices of violation issued during the preceding year, along with the civil penalty

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paid, if any.

J. Reservation. Nothing in 19.15.5.10 NMAC precludes the division from bringing any other action and seeking any relief allowed by the Oil and Gas Act.
[19.15.5.10 NMAC - Rp, 19.15.14.1227 NMAC, 12/1/2008, A, xx/xx/xxxx]

19.15.5 NMAC

NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING

The State of New Mexico through the Oil Conservation Commission (Commission) hereby gives notice that the Commission will hold the following public meeting and public hearing commencing at 9:00 a.m. on January 2, 2020, in Porter Hall, 1st Floor, Wendell Chino Building, 1220 South St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Commission shall make available to the public a preliminary agenda for the meeting no later than two weeks prior to the meeting, and a final agenda for the meeting no later than 72 hours before the meeting.

Case No. <u>20895</u>: APPLICATION OF THE NEW MEXICO OIL CONSERVATION DIVISION TO AMEND THE COMMISSION'S RULE FOR COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT IN SECTIONS 3, 8, 9, AND 10 OF 19.15.5 NMAC; STATEWIDE.

The New Mexico Oil Conservation Division (OCD) proposes to amend (1) 19.15.5.3 NMAC to add the legal authority in Section 70-2-31 NMSA 1978; (2) 19.15.5.8 NMAC to state the duties and obligations of the OCD; (3) 19.15.5.9 NMAC to reorganize the section and remove superfluous language; and (4) 19.5.5.10 NMAC to describe the OCD's enforcement authority and the procedures that the OCD will follow to issue and adjudicate notices of violation and temporary cessation orders.

<u>Purpose of Proposed Rule</u>. The proposed rule implements the enforcement authority delegated to the OCD by the 2019 amendments to the Oil and Gas Act, Sections 70-2-1 through 70-2-38 NMSA 1978.

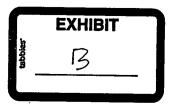
Legal Authority. The proposed rule is authorized by the Oil and Gas Act, Sections 70-2-1 through 70-2-38 NMSA 1978, and specifically, Section 70-2-6 (authorizing the Commission to exercise jurisdiction, authority and control of and over all persons, matters, and things necessary or proper to enforce the statute), Section 70-2-11 (authorizing the Commission to make rules to prevent waste, protect correlative rights, and to do whatever may be reasonably necessary to implement the statute), Section 70-2-12 (enumerating the powers of the Commission and OCD), and Section 70-2-31 (authorizing the Commission to adopt rules for the issuance and adjudication of enforcement actions, including the assessment of civil penalties). The public hearing is governed by the Commission's rule on rulemaking proceedings, 19.15.3 NMAC.

<u>Availability of Proposed Rule</u>. The full text of the proposed rule may be obtained from the Commission Clerk, Florene Davidson, 3rd Floor, Wendell Chino Building, 1220 South St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87505, <u>florene.davidson@state.nm.us</u>, (505) 476-3458, or can be viewed on the Rules page of the OCD's website at http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/ocd, or in the OCD's offices in Santa Fe, Hobbs, Artesia or Aztec.

<u>Public Hearing</u>. The Commission will hold a public hearing on the proposed rule at the Commission meeting commencing at 9:00 a.m. on January 2, 2020, in Porter Hall, 1st Floor, Wendell Chino Building, 1220 South St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico. The hearing may be continued to the following day(s) if not completed.

Proposed Modifications, Technical Testimony, and Cross Examination. Any person intending to propose a modification to the proposed rule, to present technical testimony at the hearing, or to cross-examine witnesses must file six copies of a Pre-Hearing Statement conforming to the requirements of Subsection B of 19.15.3.11 NMAC, no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 17, 2019. Filing may be accomplished by hand-delivery or first class or electronic mail to the Commission Clerk, Florene Davidson, 3rd Floor, Wendell Chino Building, 1220 South St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87505, or florene.davidson@state.nm.us. A person filing a Pre-Hearing Statement who intends to use projection equipment shall contact the Commission Clerk no later than seven business days prior to the hearing. Any person who presents technical testimony will be subject to cross-examination by the members of the Commission, the Commission's counsel, or another person who has filed a Pre-Hearing Statement on the subject matter of the person's direct testimony.

<u>Oral Comments.</u> Any person who has not submitted a Pre-Hearing Statement may present non-technical testimony or make an unsworn statement at the hearing, and may offer exhibits at the hearing so long as the exhibits are relevant to the proposed rule and do not unduly repeat the testimony, and the person provides at least six copies conforming to the requirements of Subsection C of 19.15.3.12 NMAC. Any person who wishes to present non-technical testimony must indicate such intent on the sign-in sheet at the hearing. Any person who presents non-



technical testimony will be subject to cross-examination by the Commission, the Commission's counsel, or another person who has filed a Pre-Hearing Statement on the subject matter of the person's direct testimony.

Written or Electronic Comments. Any person may submit written or electronic comments on the proposed rule no later than 9:00 a.m. on January 2, 2020, unless extended by the Commission or the Chair of the Commission, by hand-delivery or first class or electronic mail to the Commission Clerk, Florene Davidson, 3rd Floor, Wendell Chino Building, 1220 South St. Francis Drive, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87505, or florene.davidson@state.nm.us.

<u>Wireless Access</u>. Wireless access will be available at the location of the hearing, but a person intending to use the access must provide the electronic device.

<u>Persons with Disabilities</u>. If you are an individual with a disability who needs a reader, amplifier, qualified sign language interpreter, or any other form of auxiliary aid or service to attend or participate in the hearing, including a summary or other accessible form of document, please contact the Commission Clerk, Florene Davidson, <u>florene.davidson@state.nm.us</u> or (505) 476-3458, or through the New Mexico Relay Network at 1-800-659-1779, no later than December 17, 2019.

Technical Information. There is no technical information for the proposed rule.