

**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. 10663
Order No. R-9893**

**APPLICATION OF UNION OIL COMPANY
OF CALIFORNIA d/b/a UNOCAL FOR AN
ADMINISTRATIVE DOWNHOLE COMMINGLING
PROCEDURE WITHIN THE RINCON UNIT
AREA, RIO ARriba COUNTY, NEW MEXICO.**

ORDER OF THE DIVISION

BY THE DIVISION:

This cause came on for hearing at 8:15 a.m. on February 4, 1993, at Santa Fe, New Mexico, before Examiner David R. Catanach.

NOW, on this 18th day of May, 1993, 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) The applicant, Union Oil Company of California, d/b/a Unocal, seeks the adoption of an administrative procedure for authorizing the downhole commingling of Blanco-Mesaverde, Largo-Gallup, or Undesignated Gallup Pool production with production from the Basin-Dakota Gas Pool within certain existing and subsequently drilled wells in its Rincon Unit Area, Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, without additional notice to each affected interest owner within the Unit Area.
- (3) The Rincon Unit is a Federal exploratory unit initially comprising some 20,643 acres in portions of Townships 26 and 27 North and Ranges 6 and 7 West, NMPM, Rio Arriba County, New Mexico. The unit was formed in 1952 and is currently operated by Union Oil Company of California.

(4) The evidence and testimony presented indicates that the Basin-Dakota Gas Pool has been fully developed on 320-acre spacing within the Rincon Unit and that approximately half of the Unit Area has been infill drilled in the Basin-Dakota Gas Pool on 160-acre spacing. The Dakota Participating Area (PA) currently comprises virtually the entire unit area.

(5) The applicant has identified approximately thirty-three (33) infill Basin-Dakota well locations within the Unit Area which may be subsequently drilled.

(6) Based upon historical production, the applicant expects Basin-Dakota initial production from infill drilling to be marginal in nature ranging from approximately 150-600 MCF gas per day per well.

(7) Testimony and evidence presented by the applicant indicates that gas reserves in the Dakota formation on an individual well basis are not sufficient to economically justify the drilling of new wells to produce such reserves.

(8) The current well economics and expected Dakota producing rates virtually assure that these wells will be candidates for downhole commingling with either the Mesaverde or Gallup zones.

(9) The applicant has also identified approximately forty-two (42) current Dakota producing wells, some recently drilled, which also by virtue of well economics and producing rates make them candidates for downhole commingling.

(10) The applicant expects initial producing rates from the Mesaverde and Gallup formation to be marginal in nature.

(11) The Gallup, Dakota and Mesaverde Participating Areas within the Rincon Unit are not common.

(12) According to applicant's evidence, the working interest ownership within the Rincon Unit is fixed and common among the various wells and zones and is not affected by participating areas.

(13) According to further testimony, the royalty and overriding royalty interest ownership within the Rincon Unit varies between participating areas established for different locations and pools.

(14) Applicant's Exhibit No. 6 in this case is a list of one hundred and twenty (120) royalty and overriding royalty interest owners in the Dakota, Gallup and Mesaverde Participating Areas within the Rincon Unit. All such royalty and overriding royalty interest owners, as well as working interest owners, were notified of the application in this case.

(15) Rule No. 303(C) of the Division Rules and Regulations provides that administrative approval for downhole commingling may be granted provided that the interest ownership, including working, royalty and overriding royalty interest, is common among the commingled zones.

(16) Applicant's proposed administrative procedure would provide for Division approval to downhole commingle wells in the Rincon Unit Area without hearing, and without the requirement that each interest owner in the Dakota, Mesaverde and/or Gallup Participating Areas be notified of such commingling.

(17) The downhole commingling of wells within the Rincon Unit Area will benefit working, royalty and overriding royalty interest owners. In addition, the downhole commingling of wells within the Rincon Unit Area should not violate the correlative rights of any interest owner.

(18) The evidence in this case indicates that notice to each interest owner within the Dakota, Mesaverde and/or Gallup Participating Areas of subsequent downhole comminglings within the Rincon Unit is unnecessary and is an excessive burden on the applicant.

(19) No interest owner and/or offset operator appeared at the hearing in opposition to the application.

(20) An administrative procedure should be established within the Rincon Unit for obtaining approval for subsequently downhole commingled wells without notice and hearing, provided however that, all provisions contained within Rule No. 303(C) of the Division Rules and Regulations, with the exception of Part 1 (b)(v), are fully complied with.

(21) The proposed administrative procedure for obtaining approval for downhole commingling will allow the applicant the opportunity to recover additional gas reserves from the Rincon Unit Area which may otherwise not be recovered, thereby preventing waste, and will not violate correlative rights.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:

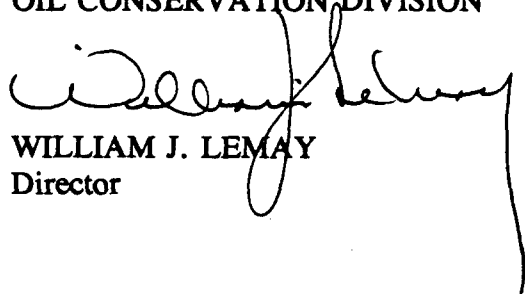
(1) An administrative procedure for obtaining approval to downhole commingle wells within the Rincon Unit, located in portions of Townships 26 and 27 North, Ranges 6 and 7 West, NMPM, Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, is hereby established.

(2) In order to obtain Division authorization to downhole commingle wells within the Rincon Unit, the applicant shall file an application with the Santa Fe and Aztec Offices of the Division. Such application shall contain all of the information required under Rule No. 303(C) of the Division Rules and Regulations, provided however that the applicant shall not be required to provide notice to all interest owners within the Dakota, Mesaverde and/or Gallup Participating Areas in the Rincon Unit of such proposed commingling. In addition, the application shall contain evidence that all offset operators and the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have been notified of the proposed commingling.

(3) 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


WILLIAM J. LEMAY
Director

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