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:

APPLICATION OF GILLESPIE-CROW, INC., FOR AN ALLOWABLE REDUCTION, LEA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

CASE NO. 11,599

ORIGINAL

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

EXAMINER HEARING

BEFORE: DAVID R. CATANACH, Hearing Examiner

August 22nd, 1996

Santa Fe, New Mexico

This matter came on for hearing before the New Mexico Oil Conservation Division, DAVID R. CATANACH,
Hearing Examiner, on Thursday, August 22nd, 1996, at the
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources
Department, Porter Hall, 2040 South Pacheco, Santa Fe, New Mexico, Steven T. Brenner, Certified Court Reporter No. 7
for the State of New Mexico.

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(Continued...)

APPEARANCES (Continued)

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* * *

WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had at 10:07 a.m.:

EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay, we've got a case on the docket today, Case Number 11,599, the Application of Gillespie-Crow, Inc., for an allowable reduction in Lea County, New Mexico.

We have a motion to dismiss the case filed by Mr.

Carr on behalf of several parties, and it's my

understanding that we are going to hear the motion this

morning, only, and decide after we hear the arguments

whether to actually dismiss the case or to dispose of it by

other means, continue it or whatever.

So at this point we'll let Mr. Carr argue his Motion to Dismiss.

MR. CARR: May it please the Examiner, I'm entering my appearance this morning in this case for Yates Petroleum Corporation; Yates Drilling Company; Abo
Petroleum Corporation; Myco Industries, Inc.; Rio Pecos Corporation; Pathfinder Exploration Company; Cannon Exploration Company; Hollyhock Corporation; Tara-Jon Corporation; Lario Oil and Gas Company; Pearson and Cochran; Hanley Petroleum, Inc.; David Petroleum Corporation and Nearburg Exploration Company, LLC.

EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay. Before you proceed,
Mr. Carr, I'll ask for other appearances in this motion

1	proceeding.
2	MR. BRUCE: Mr. Examiner, Jim Bruce from the
3	Hinkle law firm in Santa Fe. I'm representing the
4	Applicant in this case, Gillespie-Crow, Inc.
5	MR. HALL: Mr. Examiner, Scott Hall from the
6	Miller, Stratvert, Torgerson and Schlenker law firm in
7	Santa Fe on behalf of Enserch Exploration, Inc.
8	EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Hall, are you going to
9	make a presentation this morning?
10	MR. HALL: No
11	EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay.
12	MR. KELLAHIN: Mr. Examiner, I'm Tom Kellahin of
13	the Santa Fe law firm of Kellahin and Kellahin, appearing
14	on behalf of Chesapeake Oil Company.
15	EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Kellahin, are you going
16	to make a presentation?
17	MR. KELLAHIN: No, sir.
18	EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay.
19	MR. CARROLL: Mr. Carr, so Nearburg's added to
20	this list?
21	MR. CARR: Nearburg is added to the list. They
22	called yesterday afternoon and asked if they could join in
23	the motion.
24	EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay, Mr. Carr, you may
25	proceed.

MR. CARR: May it please the Examiner, the entities I represent either operate wells or own working and royalty interests in the West Lovington-Strawn Pool area and they are affected by the Application.

I think it's important in the context of this motion to note initially that we're not just talking about restricting production in the pool.

The questions that are before you are questions concerning operations. Who has the right to make decisions, decisions traditionally vested in the operator of properties in this reservoir?

The questions that are before you involve property rights and what this Division can do and must do before it takes operating rights from one owner and vests them in another.

This case involves questions about doing things right, about acting in accordance with the statutes and rules which govern this agency.

It's not so much a question about what Mr.

Gillespie seeks or thinks he needs to do; it's a question of how he's going about it and what impact this approach has on the rights of other interest owners in this reservoir.

By way of background, and as I think you know, back in November of 1994, Mr. Gillespie approached other

interest owners in this field and proposed the formation of a unit.

The result of these negotiations was a hearing in June of 1995 and the Order 10,499, which was entered last August, authorizing the formation of this unit under the Statutory Unitization Act.

Examiner at that time -- you accepted the boundaries of the unit, the horizontal boundaries, as proposed by Gillespie-Crow. You did that because they were not really challenged. In fact, on cross-examination of Mr. Crow, Mr. Kellahin marched Mr. Crow around the unit and established through the testimony of Mr. Crow that this area had been reasonably developed, that the boundaries had been reasonably defined. You named Gillespie-Crow operator of this unit.

But if you will recall, at that time you in essence rejected the Gillespie-Crow interpretation of the vertical interval. Snyder Ranches appeared, and they had their own interpretation of the vertical limits of the reservoir. You accepted those, the Division finding that Snyder Ranches' interpretation more accurately honored subsurface well data.

The issue here today is not the vertical interval but, because of this Application, becomes the horizontal

extent of this unit.

Recently Mr. Gillespie has talked to certain other operators in the pool about the expansion of the unit. The response he has gotten has been poor, and so he files his Application.

And what does he seek? He seeks to restrict production from non-unit property in the pool to, and I quote, rates equal to the average producing rate from wells in the West Lovington-Strawn unit, restrict everyone else to what he decides to produce.

And he says he's doing this because he is, quote, in the process of expanding the West Lovington Strawn unit to include certain adjoining acreage. He's in the process, trying to exclude certain undefined acreage.

I wasn't involved in the first hearing, and when I started working on this over the weekend, I thought I would come before you and say, Once pooled, shame on you; twice pooled, shame on us.

But this isn't really funny because what you have is the operator of this unit, really, in the guise of this Application, attempting to usurp the operating rights of others, and he is really asking this Division to abandon its role, its regulatory role as that applies to the West Lovington-Strawn Pool.

It isn't a question of restricting allowables.

The problem is, and the question is, whether or not Gillespie is going to be able to make decisions for others over whom he has no right to make that decision unless he's operator.

He's not here saying, Mr. Catanach, let's set a new allowable, let's set a new depth bracket allowable.

He's saying, let me decide what they can produce. And he does not have the right to do that. That's a decision that is reserved to this Division, and I submit you cannot pass that authority to someone else.

The motion that we have filed raises two basic issues.

One is, very simply, that if this is needed, there is a remedy in our statutes and in the OCD rules.

And the second objection is that what they seek is vague and absolutely unenforceable.

Now, as we think of the West Lovington-Strawn Pool, we have to accept the fact that today it is operated under two sets of rules. The Division sets spacing, sets allowables; and those of Mr. Gillespie within the unit. And he has been given the right to decide at what rate wells can be produced within the unit and how allowables are to be shared because he came to you and he got that authority.

And he came in here with experts who testified

about what they intended to do in the acreage outlined on this exhibit, and he said that the boundaries had been defined, and you agreed. And since that time he has operated the acreage within the boundary.

But now he wants to do things outside the unit.

And since the time this unit was formed, he has drilled additional wells outside the unit and he is restricting production from those to equal what's going on in the unit, over the protest of other interest owners in those wells.

If however, that is needed, if restrictions on production are needed, there is a remedy available, and that remedy is the Statutory Unitization Act. When that Act was adopted, the Legislature concluded that there were circumstances where, in fact, all properties in the pool needed to be operated by one person under one plan. Mr. Gillespie knows that. He formed the unit under that statute.

But that statute contains very express provisions governing how a unit, once formed, can then be enlarged.

And what you have before you here today is an Application that ignores those statutory provisions. He's asking, in fact, that all operational decisions be submitted to him.

Now, the requirements in the Statutory

Unitization Act go far beyond just the requirements in the

Oil and Gas Act that relate to prevention of waste and

protection of correlative rights.

And there's a reason for that, because when that Statutory Unitization Act is invoked, it involves a taking of property. The State is asked to invoke its police power and to take the rights of one person in a property and give it to another.

And so they have very specific, very strict standards that must be met before you do that, and it's to protect the rights of people like the people I represent here today who are outside the unit. The Act says you must have certain things in the application, there are very specific matters that you must find before you enter an order, and the order must contain very definite things that are required by law.

And it goes beyond that, and it says if other things are needed over and above these -- it doesn't throw these requirements out -- if other things are needed to prevent waste and protect correlative rights, then you may do those also. But you must follow the Act. And this Application today circumvents that Act.

The remedy for Mr. Gillespie is under that statute. And simply being in the process of expanding the unit, whether they succeeded or not, is not sufficient. It isn't an alternative to these statutory requirements. If he's going to make these decisions for other operators, he

must gain that right, and he must do it through statutory procedures. And it's because if he doesn't, our rights are not protected.

We have a right, before you say we can't operate our wells as we deem fit under the statewide or under the poolwide depth bracket allowable but must do what Mr. Gillespie says, we have a right first to come in here and have Mr. Gillespie present geological data that shows that this reservoir extends to the north where Hanley is operating, extends to the northeast where David Petroleum is located, extends off to the east where Yates has property interests.

And he must come in here and he must show that not only is that acreage in communication with the pool as he defined it before, but he has to show that inclusion is necessary to carry on secondary-recovery operations, and he must show that what he plans to do is fair, reasonable and equitable.

When they were here a year ago, Mr. Catanach, you rejected their interpretation of the vertical interval. The horizontal extent of this pool is now the issue. And before you tell us we can't produce the depth bracket allowable set by the State in this pool, we think we have a right to have Gillespie-Crow come in and confirm how it is that they interpreted a zero-net-pay line that conveniently

made right-angle turns in the corners of his unit, corresponding to the corners of the sections that he owned.

They said this was the boundary, that they could operate this as a unit. And now they want to tell us, to the north, the northeast and the east, what we can do.

Before you take our right to operate our properties away, they have to come in and they have to explain this line.

and if you'll go back to the order that you entered in that case, you noted that this interpretation was based on 3-D seismic but they did not show it. And before they come in and expand it and use that as a vehicle to control what we do with our property under your rules, they've got to show that 3-D seismic. We have a right to see it and a right to question it.

And that's not the issue before you here today.

That's the next round. But it is relevant here today

because we are entitled to that kind of a review before you

tell us we can't operate our property under the Rules.

Now, there are very specific provisions in the Statutory Unitization Act governing expansion of the unit. And perhaps they drew it a little tight when they put this together. I don't formulate units, as you know. But my experience is that when you put together a unit, you generally allow some sort of a buffer to be sure you're

right. There's none here.

Now, what happened is, Gillespie himself came right outside his unit and proved his interpretation wrong. But this is what they got the State to force together under the Act, and now they have to live with that. Maybe they've set a trap for themselves. But the fact is, next round we look at this unit treated as one tract, we treat Hanley as a tract, we treat David Petroleum as a tract, we treat the property with the Yates interests in it as a tract.

And you will have to find that inclusion of these properties in this unit will be fair to these people. And if, as appears, the interests in, say, the east half of 34 under the unit plan only get one-fifth of what they get on stand-alone development, you can't tell us we can't produce that until they come in and show us that inclusion is necessary and one-fifth of what we can get on a stand-alone basis is fair. And that's what we have to come in with later.

But today the question is, are they trying to circumvent this statute? And we say clearly they are.

Look at the Application itself, Mr. Catanach.

What acreage do they want to extend this control to? Well,
they say certain adjoining acreage. How can we come in and
defend when we don't know whether we are in their divine

scheme or not? What's to be restricted? Oil? All fluids? The wells north make tremendous volumes of water. Before we can defend, we need to know that.

Will what they propose work? Well, how am I going to know, if I'm operating an offsetting well, what allowable limit Mr. Gillespie has set for me now? I guess we have to call and find out. But unfortunately that is not his role, that's yours, and you can't pass it to him.

And when I say it's not just about allowable
limits, what they're asking is really authority to control
operations in the pool, because David Petroleum doesn't
know what they can do offsetting this unit to the
northeast, although they've planned two wells, because
under what Mr. Gillespie is proposing we don't know how
much we can produce. We don't know what the economics are
going to be for future development.

And the only way we will know is to, one, define who's going to operate the property and then know what the allowable limits are. And you can't just say, limit everybody else to what I want, what I decide is best for the pool, because that's not the Gillespie function.

I submit to you, Mr. Catanach, that the opposition from other owners to a plan to expand the unit is not justification for avoiding the statutory procedures that are available to expand this unit.

I submit to you that if this Division is to continue to regulate this pool, this Application has got to be dismissed, that Mr. Gillespie and Mr. Crow have got to be told to go back, to do it right, to do it in a way that is consistent with statute, that is consistent with rule, and do it in a way that's going to protect the rights of other interest owners in this field.

Because if you don't dismiss it and tell them to go back, I submit you are abandoning your statutory duties, I submit that you are turning this pool over to the unfettered whim of Gillespie-Crow. You're not requiring them to expand the unit, but you are in essence doing just that.

And then I could say to you, Once pooled, shame on them; twice pooled, shame on us.

EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Bruce?

MR. BRUCE: Mr. Examiner I've got a short response and a long response.

My short response is, this Application was filed to prevent waste and protect correlative rights. It's as simple as that. We're not here today asking you to abandon your rights and duties; we're here today asking the Division to exercise its rights and duties to prevent waste.

Mr. Examiner, I think you've had two or three

hearings regarding this pool -- well, actually involving -there have been two hearings on the pool rules, there have
been the unitization hearing, there's been the positiveproduction-response hearing. And I know you know some of
these background facts, but I think I need to mention some
of them again.

The West Lovington-Strawn Pool was discovered in 1992 by Charles Gillespie. Since then, 17 wells have been drilled within the pool, the entire pool.

But we're not here today to discuss the entire pool. We're here today to discuss the specific reservoir, the specific Strawn porosity pod included within the West Lovington-Strawn unit.

As you know, these Strawn oil reservoirs are usually discrete, limited reservoirs, which usually contain one, two, three, maybe four wells. And a number of these discrete porosity pods might be contained within the boundaries of a single Strawn pool.

That's the case in this West Lovington-Strawn

Pool. We have the large Strawn porosity pod included

within the unit. To the west there are some other wells

that are in a different porosity pod, and we're not seeking

to affect those today. And there might be other porosity

pods out there; we don't know.

During the period from mid-1992 to early 1995,

eleven producing wells were drilled within this particular reservoir that Mr. Carr has shown up on this map. These are the wells that are in the West Lovington-Strawn unit. This is the largest Strawn reservoir in the state, with the possible exception of the Lusk-Strawn Pool, which is also a large pod.

In 1994, Gillespie-Crow started unitization discussions with interest owners, which culminated in the unitization of this pool in October, 1995. I'd point out that unitization took well over a year, even though all working interest owners and about 90 percent of royalty interest owners agreed to unitization. It took that long, even though people were pretty darn well in agreement regarding unitization. Even Snyder Ranches, which came to hearing to oppose the case, was really seeking to increase its participation, which it did. And unitization has benefitted Snyder Ranches.

Now, at the time of unitization, yes, Gillespie-Crow thought it had included the entire reservoir in the unit. It wished it had. Subsequent drilling proved that to be wrong.

However, I would point out that first there's nothing wrong with unitizing only a portion of a reservoir.

The Statutory Unitization Act specifically provides for that.

Second, the evidence presented in Case 11,531, the positive-production-response case, proved that unitization has prevented reservoir damage and allowed additional oil to be recovered from this pool. That's critical. And I think these facts are necessary background to why Gillespie-Crow filed this Application.

In late 1995, after unitization, Gillespie-Crow drilled the State "S" Well Number 1. It's in the west half, southeast quarter, of Section 34. I'll get up in a while and use this map to point out where some of these wells are located.

This immediately adjoins the unit, and this well is definitely in pressure communication with all wells in the West Lovington-Strawn unit. I have a handout here in a minute I'll give to you. It is capable of top allowable production.

In early 1996, Hanley Petroleum, one of the Movants today, drilled its Chandler Number 1 well. This well is also completed in the same reservoir as the West Lovington-Strawn unit. It's only 330 feet north of the unit's boundary.

Based on these completions, Gillespie-Crow has started discussions with the working interest owners to add additional acreage to the unit. To date, these negotiations have not been successful, to say the least.

Yates and the others have vociferously objected to unitization, and because of these disputes, it could be a year or more before the unit is expanded.

Now, Mr. Carr said certain people have been invited. Well, Hanley was not initially invited to these discussions. At the time these discussions were initiated, the Hanley well was a tight hole. It had no information. Since that time, the logs have come out. We believe these show the Hanley well to be in this reservoir, and Hanley will be invited to the next meeting.

But as a result of the time involved in unitization, especially when you have these squabbling parties, it is critical that the unit reservoir be protected from damage pending unitization, and that is why this Application was filed.

Now, let's go to the matters in the motion. I believe there are some incorrect allegations in the motion which I will address shortly, but I will address the main issue.

That is the assertion that the Application should be dismissed because Gillespie-Crow's sole remedy, sole remedy, is to expand the unit under the Statutory Unitization Act.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

First, we all know the OCD's charge is to prevent

waste and protect correlative rights, and both of those principles are involved in this Application.

I know I'm not a witness, Mr. Examiner, but I think we have to get into some of these facts. What I've handed out is bottomhole pressure history of the State "S" Well Number 1. When it was completed in September, 1995 -- I'm not going to go through this whole thing, but it had a bottomhole pressure of 3286 p.s.i.

A month ago its bottomhole pressure is 3295

p.s.i. The pressure has increased, even though it's

produced almost 60,000 barrels of oil. How does that

happen if it's not in pressure communication with the West

Lovington-Strawn reservoir? It is receiving pressure

support from the gas-injection pressure-maintenance project

for this unit.

Well, what's the effect of this? Well, number one, certainly, the interest owners in the State "S" Well Number 1 are benefitting from pressure maintenance without paying any of the unit costs. Well, big deal, you can say. And that's probably the minor part of this issue. But -- And also, the Hanley well is benefitting from pressure maintenance.

But because of this, because they are benefitting and because the unit wells are only producing less than 200 barrels a day, we think it's only fair and in the interests

of correlative rights to produce the State "S" Well Number 1 at the same rate as the unit wells. Why? to prevent waste.

Testimony in Case 11,531 showed that this reservoir had undergone rapid pressure decline before unitization, from an initial reservoir pressure of about 4400 p.s.i. down to -- I think at the time of unitization, it was down around 3000, 3100 p.s.i.

As a result of this pressure decline, Gillespie-Crow had restricted production in all wells for the year and a half prior to unitization to 100 barrels of oil per day. After injection began, production was increased, first to 175 barrels a day, and then up to about 200 barrels a day when this last case was heard.

During this process, Gillespie-Crow has been attempting to learn the maximum amount of oil which can be removed from the reservoir each day and be able to replace that volume, the volume of the oil removed, with injected gas to maintain a pressure which is sufficient to keep the oil production up without channeling or coning of gas into the producing wellbores.

If large amounts of gas have to be injected and if the wells start to cone, the producing wells will gas out and large amounts of oil will be left in the ground. That is waste, and that is what the Division should

prevent.

Well, what is the effect of these new wells?

First, Mr. Examiner, for each barrel of oil produced, about

2 MCF of gas must be injected. So for a top-allowable well

like the State "S" Number 1, that's about 900 MCF per day.

For each barrel of water produced, about another MCF of gas
has to be injected.

The State "S" well produces about 445 barrels a day. Reportedly Hanley's Chandler Number 1 produces 125 barrels of oil per day and about 300 barrels of water per day.

The result is that if these wells are allowed to produce at their capacity, Gillespie-Crow has to inject another million and a half cubic feet of gas per day into that unit's injection well in order to maintain pressures and prevent harm to the reservoir. Of course, Yates doesn't care, they're not paying for that.

There's another factor besides unregulated withdrawals which may cause coning, may cause waste.

Gillespie-Crow has a compressor out there which cannot handle any additional volume. Why not get a bigger one?

Well, first of all, it takes time. You can't just put a compressor on there anymore like you used to. You've got to go out there and get environmental permits for emissions. That takes months to get those permits from the

New Mexico Environment Department.

What if additional wells are drilled? Then you've got to get a bigger compressor. What if there are unregulated withdrawals? This causes a problem. It will cause waste. It could cause premature gassing-out of producing wells in this reservoir.

As it is, the unit wells, which as of the last hearing were producing approximately 200 barrels of oil per day each, have had their production cut back at this time so that production from the State "S" Number 1 and the Chandler Number 1 will not adversely affect reservoir performance. So it has had a direct effect on the correlative rights of the interest owners in the West Lovington-Strawn unit.

The conclusion is simply this: If production is not restricted, the reservoir may be harmed, causing waste, and furthermore the correlative rights of the unit owners are being adversely affected.

Mr. Carr made comment that these unit boundaries were formed just to benefit Gillespie-Crow. As you know from the hearings, the two main working interest owners in this unit are Gillespie-Crow and Enserch.

Well, Gillespie-Crow itself, Charles Gillespie individually and Enserch own approximately 50 percent of the working interest in the immediately offsetting acreage

to the west, and to the east they own anywhere from 50 to 100 percent of the working interest. They too are affected by this proposed allowable restriction. They have more to lose than anyone. But this Application is necessary to prevent reservoir damage until the unit can be expanded.

Next, is this Application permissible under OCD rules? Yes. Rule 505 allows the OCD to increase or reduce the allowable in a pool. This Application is squarely within the requirements of that rule. Rule 505 does not state it does not apply where a unitization is being considered. It can be applied at any time. And we think the OCD can and should apply this rule whenever necessary, as in this case, to prevent waste.

Is this Application authorized by the Division's general authority to prevent waste? Yes, and you need go no further than the Santa Fe Exploration case, which Mr. Carr conveniently ignores. The Santa Fe Exploration case reduced allowables in a small discrete pool, pending unitization by the parties.

Yes, this case involved -- the Santa Fe
Exploration case involved voluntary unitization. But we
think that distinction is meaningless. Production was
restricted in that pool, pending unitization, to prevent
injury to neighboring properties and to ensure that each
operator only use his fair share of reservoir energy.

That's exactly what Gillespie-Crow is asking the Division to do in this case, to restrict production, to prevent harm to the reservoir and to prevent injury to neighboring properties.

There's a few final issues to address. I think these are more properly for the hearing, but since Mr. Carr brought them up...

How many wells will be affected by this

Application? At this time, one, the State "S" Well Number

1. What Gillespie-Crow seeks is a restriction on oil

production from wells adjoining the unit which are

completed in the same reservoir. The Hanley well is

unaffected because it's producing only 125 barrels of oil

per day, which is less than the unit's allowable.

will the State "S" Number 1 be affected? I suppose to a certain extent it will. But Gillespie-Crow and Enserch -- I forget the exact percentage, but they own roughly half of the working interest in that well. When there was a title dispute, they thought they owned about 80 percent of the working interest in that well, and that came -- that was just recently resolved in that well.

But let me give you some background on that well.

It was not -- it has not always been -- It has not always had its production restricted. It was produced for several months at top allowable. Starting in early 1996, its

production was restricted due to the title issues I just mentioned. More recently, its production has been increased back up to the top allowable because of protests by Yates and other of Mr. Carr's clients.

As I noted, this is at the expense of the interest owners in the unit, because those wells have had their production decreased concomitantly to prevent reservoir damage.

I'd point out that this well paid out some time ago, and even under the Application as it was envisioned at the time, it would still produce about 200 barrels of oil per day, and that's pretty good production, especially when you don't have to pay the unit costs.

What acreage is affected? Let me give you some idea. Once again, we think this is something for hearing. I'd first start off by saying, you remember Mr. Kellahin here with Mr. Squires, geologist. Yes, you accepted their geology.

But if you'll go back and look at their map, their unit outline wasn't any different than Gillespie-Crow's. There's some differences in the thicknesses over on the east side of the unit. There's a few other things. There is an oil-water contact which Snyder Ranches agreed was at the north edge of the unit. That will mean that much of this acreage to the north and northeast will

probably be unaffected.

What Gillespie-Crow envisions at this time is about a 40-acre ring surrounding the unit that may be affected. The reason I say "may be affected" is, look, the Amerind West State Number 1, a dryhole right here, the unit will not be expanded in that area. Over here we've got the Bridge Julia Culp Number 2, a dryhole. That's how the unit can be expanded in that direction. To the north you've got the oil-water contact. We don't know but -- This is the unit for the Hanley well. It's probably the only -- It was drilled right over here, 330 feet off the line. It will probably be the only unit affected in that direction.

What about down here? Well, we could add acreage to the south. This acreage right here is 100-percent Charles Gillespie. They could have included it the first go-around; they didn't. Over here, 100-percent Charles Gillespie. This tract right here, Lot 6, Section 6, Gillespie owned that 100 percent, and they let that lease expire less than three weeks ago, because they didn't want to drill on it. It's now owned by Snyder ranches.

We think that the effect of this Application is very limited, because we thought we had the reservoir adequately the first time. We were wrong, but we didn't think we did bad, considering that this reef is less than 50 feet thick and we're dealing with 11,500 feet under the

ground. Those things happen, and that's why the Statutory Unitization Act does allow for expansion of units.

I would reiterate that the unit boundaries were not drawn to include only Gillespie-Crow and Enserch acreage. As I said, they own most of the adjoining acreage. It doesn't hurt them to add it in.

Finally, what rate will the operators know to produce? Well, I think another issue to be decided at hearing and put on evidence at hearing. But we think this is a non-issue. I suppose the Division could set a maximum rate, or it could say the rate of the production from the unit.

Is this difficult to administer? No, there's only two operators in this reservoir, Gillespie-Crow and Hanley. This is not hard to administer. They could give a monthly notice. Chances are, because of the acreage position of Enserch and Gillespie-Crow in this area, the only other operators who could be affected are probably going to be Gillespie-Crow.

I didn't want to address these factual issues, but Yates seems to want Gillespie-Crow to present all its evidence with the Application. That's not how it's done, but I thought I had to address some of these issues to show that this is not a difficult case.

Clearly, the Division has the authority to grant

this Application. This Application is necessary to prevent breakthrough of gas in this reservoir which would lead to a reduction in recovered oil, thereby causing waste. It is also necessary to protect the correlative rights of the unit owners.

Moreover, the Division not only has the authority to hear this case, we believe it has the duty to hear this case, to make a determination on the waste issue.

Dismissing the case on this motion will be an abdication of the Division's responsibility to prevent waste in this pool. As a result, Gillespie-Crow requests that this motion be denied and this case be set for the next Examiner hearing.

One final thing, Mr. Examiner, before I turn it back to Mr. Carr for his response. Phillips Petroleum Company, which is a working interest owner in the West Lovington-Strawn unit, submitted this letter stating that it supports Gillespie-Crow, Inc., in this Application, and I would just submit that for the record.

Thank you.

MR. CARR: Mr. Catanach, may I respond?

EXAMINER CATANACH: Yes.

MR. CARR: I would note that Phillips and Enserch have interests within the unit, and obviously they would like to restrict others who they have -- are concerned

about maybe perhaps interfering with unit operations.

I would note that when yo don't have a defense to a motion to dismiss, you don't argue the issue; you argue something else. And that's what's happened here today.

The issue before you in this motion is not all of the waste, correlative-rights issues that Mr. Bruce has been wallowing in. The issue is, can you as an agency take away our operating rights and give them to Gillespie-Crow? That's the issue. We're talking about property rights, we're talking about whether or not they are properly before this agency, simply saying, restrict them to what we decide we want to produce. And so of course they go and say, you have general authority to prevent waste, to protect correlative rights.

But let me tell you something. You look at the Oil and Gas Act, you look at the statutes which empowered you to act, and you're going to find two places, only two, where you may take my property right away and give it to Mr. Bruce. One is compulsory pooling, one is statutory unitization, and they have very specific requirements, the first of which, in both cases, is that you give the other party notice and you try and work out a voluntary agreement. By Mr. Bruce's admission, that didn't occur here. I'm going to come back to that.

But in both of those situations there are very

Specific requirements, and look at the Statutory

Unitization Act. It says to prevent waste, to protect

correlative rights, you may do what needs to be done, but

you must first do what we require in this Act. You must

find it is just, fair and reasonable to extend. You must

find that it is fair to everyone outside. And you must

fully vest operations in someone else.

This is a back-door way, and it is a result of the fact that when they decided they were wrong, a year ago, that instead of doing it right, they just decided, well, we'll try and go in and just under the banner of general authority correct this.

But you can't do that, you can't take our rights away without following the law, and that's what they're asking you to do. You may do more, but you simply cannot do less.

Whether or not there's pressure communication to the north and whether or not it extends only 40 -- Mr. Bruce tells us that, but the Application does not. And yes, those are things that are reserved for the next hearing.

The question here is procedural. Do you follow the rules, do you follow the statutes? Or do you just come in and say, Yes, OCD, you can just do just about anything? And you stand up and you say, It's been proven, look at the

Santa Fe Exploration case; Mr. Carr conveniently overlooked that. And yet that was a voluntary unit, this is statutory. But that is a distinction that is meaningless to Mr. Bruce.

Well, I'll tell you why it's not meaningless, because with a statutory unit you take my right away, and in a voluntary unit I agree to let him operate. That is as fundamental a difference as comes before you in any situation, and it renders the Santa Fe Exploration case of no value in this proceeding.

And to go run after that is about as silly as to say you can prevent waste generally, but forget the Act that sets the requirements you must meet before you can take my property away.

They have great plans, limited effect, and if they do, and if that's right, then the statutes say, You come to the people I represent first and try and work it out before you come marching in here.

And then say, Oh, yes, well, Rule 505 says the OCD may increase or reduce allowables in a pool. You know, that's right, and if you were here today and we were looking at a change in the depth bracket allowable for the pool and we were asking the OCD to set the allowable, we'd agree to that, we'd come and we'd argue the case.

But they're not asking that. They're saying,

1	Forget your depth bracket allowable; I, Charlie Gillespie,
2	will set the allowable limit. And Mr. Catanach, that's
3	wrong. You can't do that. You can't do that, you can't
4	take our property away without following the statute. And
5	to come in here and run around under the general power to
6	prevent waste and ignore the statutes which create this
7	agency and empower you to act leads you into terrible
8	error.
9	This Application must be dismissed, they must be
10	told to go back to Midland and follow the law and do it
11	right.
12	EXAMINER CATANACH: Did you want to respond, Mr.
13	Bruce?
14	MR. BRUCE: No.
15	EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Hall, any statement?
16	MR. HALL: No.
17	EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Kellahin, any statement?
18	MR. KELLAHIN: No, sir.
19	EXAMINER CATANACH: Let's take five minutes, ten
20	minutes, and we'll come back with a ruling on it.
21	MR. CARROLL: I have some questions.
22	EXAMINER CATANACH: I guess we have some
23	questions, gentlemen, if you want to
24	MR. CARROLL: Mr. Bruce, what is the status of
25	the attempts to obtain voluntary unitization of this

adjoining acreage? 1 MR. BRUCE: 2 They've held -- I forget, two or 3 three working interest owners' meetings. MR. CARROLL: And then the response? 4 5 MR. BRUCE: Yates -- None of them want to be unitized. 6 MR. CARROLL: None? 7 MR. BRUCE: None. And they're calling another 8 meeting, I was just informed today, in a few weeks or a 9 10 couple weeks. MR. CARROLL: And is it Gillespie-Crow's intent 11 to seek statutory unitization? 12 MR. BRUCE: Yes, it is. 13 MR. CARROLL: If you obtain what you're seeking 14 15 for in this Application, limiting the adjoining wells' 16 production, what incentive would you have, then, to seek statutory unitization? 17 MR. BRUCE: We think there might be some 18 additional acreage that needs to be added, rather than 19 fighting this on a well-by-well basis, you know. 20 they're committed to seeking unitization. They just -- but 21 -- I mean, you could make that part of the order, that 22 they're required to go forward with it. 23 But they need time to discuss these matters. 24 I mean, like I said, nobody has agreed to it. The data I've 25

given you shows they're in pressure communication, but they still don't want to be unitized. It takes a long time to do this.

MR. CARROLL: So when can the Division anticipate the filing of an application for statutory unitization?

MR. BRUCE: Well, I can't give you that right now, but if necessary you can put a time limit on this production restriction to make them come forward.

But what they have been doing is trying to meet to come to terms with these people, rather than face what we did the last go-around, when Mr. Squires objected. And I think that's required by the Act, to make a good-faith effort to voluntarily unitize before you statutorily unitize.

You also have to -- This is state acreage involved. We'll have to go back to the State Land Office, seek their approval. There is federal acreage in this unit. Well, no, I don't think there will be any additional federal acreage. But for an expanded unit, since there is federal acreage in the existing unit, we'll have to go back to that.

The intent is not to get this and abandon unitization. The intent here is to prevent excessive withdrawals of reservoir energy, pending their discussions with the parties on unitization.

MR. CARROLL: And what wells again were -- what 1 2 wells do you hope to restrict the production on? 3 MR. BRUCE: I don't know which quarter section it's in. The State "S" Number 1 in the west half, 4 5 southeast quarter of Section 34 is the only well at this 6 time. This well, the Hanley well in the -- Section 28 7 to the north, would not be restricted. 8 9 MR. CARROLL: Would not? 10 MR. BRUCE: Would not. But they do -- But since that is a -- since they've just recently gotten the log 11 12 data from that well, they do plan on seeking the unitization of that acreage also, since it is within the 13 I mean, since it is within the unit's reservoir. 14 15 MR. CARROLL: The State "S" is operated by 16 Gillespie-Crow? 17 MR. BRUCE: Gillespie-Crow. EXAMINER CATANACH: Gillespie-Crow operates the 18 19 State "S" Well Number 1? 20 MR. BRUCE: Yes, they do. 21 EXAMINER CATANACH: But you're producing at top allowable rates? 22 23 MR. BRUCE: They informed me that late last month they increased it back up to its top allowable rate, as an 24 25 accommodation to Yates and the others.

Pursuant to any operating EXAMINER CATANACH: 1 agreement in place for that well, you can't voluntarily 2 restrict -- you can't, as operator, restrict production 3 from the well? 4 MR. BRUCE: They are operator of the well 5 pursuant to an operating agreement, but they did restrict 6 7 production, and everyone else squawked, so they increased 8 it. 9 MR. CARROLL: How many acres are in the unit and 10 how many acres are in the pool? MR. BRUCE: My memory is not that good. 11 includes --12 MR. KELLAHIN: Let me see if I've got it here. 13 MR. BRUCE: It's about 1400 or 1500 acres in 14 the -- 1458.95 acres in the unit. The pool does not 15 correspond to the unit. The pool extends further to the 16 17 west because of some wells drilled out there, both by 18 Gillespie and by Amerind. MR. CARROLL: To the west? 19 MR. BRUCE: To the west. And there's another 20 well -- It's a separate porosity pod, and we don't seek to 21 22 affect that. I think there's also a well being drilled in 23 that same separate porosity pod now by Nearburg. 24 MR. CARROLL: So what we're looking at is the eastern -- northeastern extent of the pool? 25

MR. BRUCE: Yeah, I forgot to bring -- I could have drawn it on there, but -- You have a magic marker?

The pool extends this way and it comes down this way, something like that.

EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay.

MR. BRUCE: And there are wells -- Gillespie has a well over here, Amerind -- I forget exactly where, but Amerind has a couple of wells. And Nearburg has a well permit, and I think they're drilling it right down there.

MR. CARROLL: That's all I have.

EXAMINER CATANACH: Mr. Bruce, the interest owners within the existing unit, are they in favor of expanding the unit?

MR. BRUCE: I believe the main interest -working interest owners that we haven't approached, the -like I said, the State of New Mexico, the State Land Office
or the BLM, who are the two primary royalty owners, I think
Snyder Ranches is aware of it, I think the State Land
Office is aware of it, but the working interest owners in
the unit, Enserch and Phillips and Gillespie, who together
are about 97 percent of the working interest, are in favor
of it.

EXAMINER CATANACH: So do you feel like you have enough of the interest owners in agreement to initiate statutory unitization proceedings? You have enough of the

1	75 percent of the cost-bearing interests committed at this
2	point to where you could go ahead with the Application?
3	MR. BRUCE: I can't say that for sure, Mr.
4	Examiner. Probably, but I can't say that for sure.
5	EXAMINER CATANACH: What you're waiting on is,
6	then, to conduct further negotiations to try and work out
7	voluntary settlements?
8	MR. BRUCE: Agree on participation factors.
9	EXAMINER CATANACH: This one porosity pod we're
10	talking about, that's basically a pool by itself, I mean
11	MR. BRUCE: Yes.
12	EXAMINER CATANACH: the other two porosity
13	pods, they're not in pressure communication
14	MR. BRUCE: They are not.
15	EXAMINER CATANACH: with this pool?
16	MR. BRUCE: They are not in pressure
17	communication.
18	EXAMINER CATANACH: So basically what we're
19	talking about here is actually a pool restricting the
20	allowable within this one particular pod
21	MR. BRUCE: Within that one.
22	EXAMINER CATANACH: which could be considered
23	a pool
24	MR. BRUCE: Yes.
25	EXAMINER CATANACH: if things were a little

different?

MR. BRUCE: We notified everyone within a mile of the -- We notified a bunch of people just because we were uncertain of the notice requirements. We notified the working interest owners in the unit, every one -- every interest owner in the State "S" Well Number 1 and all operators or lessees within a mile of the pool.

EXAMINER CATANACH: Do you know why your

Application maybe wasn't styled differently to where you

did look at the depth bracket allowable for the pool? Was

there a reason that it wasn't styled like that?

MR. BRUCE: No. Partly it was my question -- I mean, I consider this a pool in and of itself, but there was no particular reason. Maybe inartful wording. But I didn't want to give the impression that I was seeking to restrict production from those Amerind and Nearburg wells to the west.

MR. CARR: Mr. Catanach, could I respond to just a couple of things that came up during that question?

I recognize the concern about the posture of the case. And as I said at the beginning, our concern is not with what needs to be done, but the procedures that are being followed to achieve those ends.

And I would note that in regard to the fact that there have been meetings to try to come to terms with other

operators in the pool, the Hanley tract which Mr. Bruce has drawn on the operator, that's never even been contacted or brought into these meetings. And time is a problem. But if we look at the information provided by Mr. Bruce on the State "S" Number 1, they've known since 9-24-95 when they got a bottomhole pressure test on their well over here that they had the problem.

Now my corners are as round as -- they're about like his contour map.

But in any event, the problem is that they've had eleven months to get this thing going. And they say only one well is affected, but David Petroleum Corporation really has plans to hopefully this year drill offsetting the unit to the northeast, and they don't know what to do because they won't really be able to rely on your rules, or really anything else, in terms of what their plans are.

The Application remains vague. Mr. Bruce didn't want to make Nearburg or Amerind think that they were being involved, but Nearburg certainly was concerned, because that's how it's styled.

And the fact of the matter is, there is a way to address this, and it's set by statute, and that's the Statutory Unitization Act. And they need to get on with that, and then we'll discuss all these engineering and technical issues. But, to just come in with an Application

where they give notice to everybody within a mile, that maybe only want to affect an offsetting ring of 40s, the Application is vague, the procedure is wrong, and it must be dismissed.

MR. BRUCE: Mr. Examiner, you know, we could reapply, restyle the Application, seek to have this particular porosity pod identified as the West Lovington-Strawn Pool, and all those other porosity pods out there identified or re-identified as separate pools, and then seek a poolwide allowable reduction.

I think that's form over substance. We'd still be asking for the same thing. We'd come in, identify that pool, identify that porosity pod, and ask for everything within a mile that's not in a separate porosity pod, to have an allowable reduced to and let the Commission -- let the Division set the allowable, 200 barrels a day, 150 barrels a day, 250 barrels a day. That's what we're asking for now.

MR. CARR: We don't think it's form over substance to have you set a fixed allowable. That's different in our judgment than having a competing offsetting operator tell us how much we can produce and change it month by month at his whim. We don't think that's form over substance.

EXAMINER CATANACH: All right, let's take a break

and we'll...

(Thereupon, a recess was taken at 11:06 a.m.)

(The following proceedings had at 11:16 a.m.)

EXAMINER CATANACH: Gentlemen, we think that the issues in this case need to be heard, the Division needs to consider the waste issues and the correlative-rights issues that are at issue right now.

We're a little concerned with the way the case is styled. We're not sure that the way that it's styled would satisfy some procedural concerns. We would possibly -- We would suggest maybe amending the current Application to include some things that aren't in the current advertisement, such as maybe the creation of a new pool for this unit only, and then the -- taking a look at -- taking a look at the new pool rules, including spacing and allowables for the pool.

That's just a suggestion, if somehow we could improve the procedural aspects of the case.

But in essence, we do agree that we would like to hear the case and, you know, address some of the correlative-rights and waste issues.

So I would therefore deny Mr. Carr's Motion to

Dismiss the Application at this time. But again, I would

recommend that the case may be re-advertised in a different

fashion, and maybe --

1	MR. BRUCE: Mr. Examiner, let me amend the
2	Application and continue the case until it's amended and
3	new notice is given.
4	EXAMINER CATANACH: Do you think maybe four weeks
5	would satisfy that, Mr. Bruce?
6	MR. BRUCE: (Nods)
7	EXAMINER CATANACH: We could get it readvertised
8	and renoticed and do some of the things that maybe weren't
9	done?
10	MR. BRUCE: Yes.
11	EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay, then we'll go ahead and
12	continue this case, Case 11,599, to the September 19th
13	docket.
14	MR. CARR: We will be filing a subpoena, that we
15	may need to discuss on the 19th, just so they know.
16	EXAMINER CATANACH: Okay. I believe that's all
17	we have on this docket, therefore this docket is
18	dismissed or adjourned.
19	(Thereupon, these proceedings were concluded at
20	11:21 a.m.)
21	I de hereby certify that the foregoing is a complete record of the proceedings in
22	the Examiner hours, of Gase No. 1599. heard by me on Agent 20 19 96.
23	Level Rectart, Exeminer
24	Oil Conservation Division
25	

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF NEW MEXICO)
) ss.
COUNTY OF SANTA FE)

I, Steven T. Brenner, Certified Court Reporter and Notary Public, HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing transcript of proceedings before the Oil Conservation Division was reported by me; that I transcribed my notes; and that the foregoing is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am not a relative or employee of any of the parties or attorneys involved in this matter and that I have no personal interest in the final disposition of this matter.

WITNESS MY HAND AND SEAL August 26th, 1996.

STEVEN T. BRENNER

CCR No. 7

My commission expires: October 14, 1998