

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS
HEARINGS DIVISION**

OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 7B-0311289

ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST SHORT, CHARLES GREGORY, SOLE PROPRIETOR, OIL & GAS OPERATIONS (OPERATOR NO. 620256) FOR VIOLATIONS OF STATEWIDE RULES ON THE CROUCHING EAGLE (16893) LEASE, WELL NO. 1, HUNSAKER (NOODLE CREEK) FIELD, FISHER COUNTY, TEXAS

FINAL ORDER

The Railroad Commission of Texas ("Commission") finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by a Commission Administrative Law Judge on August 30, 2018, and that the respondent, Oil & Gas Operations, failed to appear or respond to the **Notice of Opportunity for Hearing**. Pursuant to § 1.25 of the Commission's General Rules of Practice and Procedure, 16 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 1.25, and after being duly submitted to the Commission at a conference held in its offices in Austin, Texas, the Commission makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Short, Charles Gregory, Sole Proprietor, Oil & Gas Operations ("Respondent"), Operator No. 620256, was sent the Original Complaint and Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified and first-class mail, addressed to the most recent Commission Form P-5 (Organization Report) ("Form P-5") address. Short, Charles Gregory, Sole Proprietor, Oil & Gas Operations was also sent the Original Complaint and Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified and first-class mail, addressed to Respondent at the forwarding address provided by the USPS
2. The certified mail envelope containing the Original Complaint and Notice of Opportunity for Hearing addressed to the Respondent on Stute was returned to the Commission unopened on July 25, 2018. The first-class mail envelope addressed to Respondent at this address was returned to the Commission on July 24, 2018. The certified mail envelope addressed to Respondent on Tradwinds was returned to the Commission on July 17, 2018. The first-class mail envelope addressed to Respondent at this address was not returned to the Commission. Record of the delivery and return of certified mail has been on file with the Commission for more than 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance. Respondent was given more than 30 days' notice of the Original Complaint and Notice of Opportunity for Hearing. Respondent has not entered into an agreed settlement order, filed an answer or requested a hearing.
3. On December 21, 2015, Respondent, a sole proprietorship, filed a Form P-5 with the Commission reporting that its owner consists of the following individual: Charles Gregory Short.

4. Charles Gregory Short was in a position of ownership or control of Respondent, as defined in TEX. NAT. RES. CODE § 91.114, during the time period of the violations of Commission rules committed by Respondent.
5. Respondent's Form P-5 is delinquent. Respondent had a \$25,000.00 bond as its financial assurance at the time of the last Form P-5 annual renewal submission.
6. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of the Crouching Eagle (16893) Lease, Well No. 1, by filing a Commission Form P-4 (Certificate of Compliance and Transportation Authority), effective December 1, 1993, approved December 15, 1993.
7. Commission District inspection reports made on January 19, 2018 and February 28, 2018 for the Crouching Eagle (16893) Lease indicated hydrocarbon pollution between the storage tanks affecting a 5'x 3' area and around the load line valves affecting a 6'x 6' area. A subsequent inspection conducted on April 23, 2018 revealed that while the affected area between the tanks had resolved itself due to weathering, the area around the load line valves remains.
8. Respondent did not have a permit for said discharges, nor were they authorized under Statewide Rules 8(d)(3), 8(e), 9, 46 or 98.
9. Unpermitted discharges of oil and gas waste, in violation of Statewide Rule 8(d)(1), can contaminate the land surface, affect the health of humans and animals, and may eventually be discharged to surface or subsurface waters, causing pollution.
10. A Commission District inspection report made on January 9, 2018, and the absence of reported production since November 2015, show that the Crouching Eagle (16893) Lease, Well No. 1, has been inactive for a period greater than one year. Production from the subject well ceased in October 2015.
11. No workovers, re-entries, or subsequent operations have taken place on the subject well within the last twelve months; the subject well has not been properly plugged in accordance with Statewide Rule 14, 16 TEX. ADMIN CODE § 3.14; and no plugging extensions are in effect for the subject well as allowed by Statewide Rule 14.
12. Usable quality groundwater in the area can become contaminated by migrations or discharges of saltwater and other oil and gas waste from the subject well. Unplugged wellbores, in violation of Statewide Rule 14(b)(2), constitute a cognizable threat to the public health and safety because of the potential of pollution.
13. The total estimated cost to the State for plugging the Crouching Eagle (16893) Lease Well No. 1 is \$20,814.30.
14. Commission District inspection reports made on January 9, 2018, February 28, 2018 and April 23, 2018 on the Crouching Eagle (16893) Lease show there are no firewalls around the tank battery, which is located approximately 250' from CR 233.

15. Failing to erect a dike or fire wall as required by Statewide Rule 21(j) can cause fires.
16. The Respondent has no prior history of violations of Commission Rules.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Proper notice was issued by the Commission to Respondent and all other appropriate persons legally entitled to notice.
2. All things necessary to the Commission attaining jurisdiction over the subject matter and the parties have been performed or have occurred.
3. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with all applicable Commission rules and TEX. NAT. RES. CODE, chs. 89 and 91.
4. Respondent is in violation of Statewide Rules 8(d)(1), 14(b)(2), and 21(j). 16 TEX. ADMIN. CODE §§ 3.8(d)(1), 3.14(b)(2), and 3.21(j).
5. The documented violations committed by Respondent constitute acts deemed serious, and a hazard to the public health, and demonstrate a lack of good faith pursuant to TEX. NAT. RES. CODE § 81.0531(c).
6. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 8(d)(1), which prohibits the discharge of oil and gas waste without a permit.
7. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 14(b)(2), which requires that plugging operations on each dry or inactive well shall be commenced within a period of one year after drilling or operations cease and shall proceed with due diligence until completed, unless the operator is eligible for and obtains an extension of the plugging deadline.
8. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 21(j), which requires that dikes or fire walls be erected and kept around all permanent oil tanks or battery of tanks that are within the corporate limits of any city, town or village or where such tanks are closer than 500 feet to any highway or inhabited dwelling or closer than 1,000 feet to any school or church, or where such tanks are located as to be deemed by the Commission to be an objectionable hazard.
9. Pursuant to TEX. NAT. RES. CODE § 81.0531, the Commission may assess administrative penalties against Respondent for the subject violations of up to \$10,000 per day for each violation, with each day such violations continued constituting a separate violation.

10. An assessed administrative penalty in the amount of **NINE THOUSAND, TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS (\$9,025.00)** is justified considering the facts and violations at issue.
11. As a person in a position of ownership or control of Respondent at the time Respondent violated Commission rules related to safety and the control of pollution, Charles Gregory Short, and any other organization in which this individual may hold a position of ownership or control, is subject to the restriction in TEX. NAT. RES. CODE § 91.114(a)(2).

ORDERING PROVISIONS

IT IS ORDERED THAT within 30 days from the day immediately following the date this order becomes final:

1. Short, Charles Gregory, Sole Proprietor, Oil & Gas Operations (Operator No. 620256) shall plug the Crouching Eagle (16893) Lease, Well No. 1, and place the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rules 8(d)(1), 14(b)(2), and 21(j), and any other applicable Commission rules and statutes.
2. Short, Charles Gregory, Sole Proprietor, Oil & Gas Operations (Operator No. 620256) shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **NINE THOUSAND, TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS (\$9,025.00)**.

It is further **ORDERED** that as a person in a position of ownership or control of Respondent at the time Respondent violated Commission rules related to safety and the control of pollution, Charles Gregory Short, and any other organization in which this individual may hold a position of ownership or control, **shall be subject to the restriction in TEX. NAT. RES. CODE § 91.114(a)(2) for a period of no more than seven years from the date the order entered in this matter becomes final**, or until the conditions that constituted the violations herein are corrected or are being corrected in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed, and all administrative, civil, and criminal penalties and all cleanup and plugging costs incurred by the State relating to those conditions are paid or are being paid in accordance with a schedule to which the Commission and the organization have agreed.

It is further **ORDERED** by the Commission that this order shall not be final and effective until 25 days after the order is signed, unless the time for filing a motion for rehearing has been extended under TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.142, by agreement under TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.147, or by written Commission order issued pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.146(e). If a timely motion for rehearing of an application is filed by any party at interest, this order shall not become final and effective until such motion is overruled, or if such motion is granted, this order shall be subject to further action by the Commission. Pursuant to TEX. GOV'T CODE § 2001.146(e), the time allotted for Commission action on a motion for rehearing in this case prior to its being overruled by

operation of law is hereby extended until 100 days from the date the Commission order is signed.

All requested findings of fact and conclusions of law, which are not expressly adopted herein, are denied. All pending motions and requests for relief not previously granted or granted herein are denied.

Noncompliance with the provisions of this order is subject to enforcement by the Attorney General and subject to civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per day per violation.

Done this 30th day of October 2018.

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS

(Signatures affixed by Default Master
Order dated October 30, 2018)

KMR