

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS  
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL  
HEARINGS SECTION**

**OIL AND GAS DOCKET NO. 10-0252517**

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**ENFORCEMENT ACTION FOR ALLEGED VIOLATIONS COMMITTED BY FORT WORTH NATURAL GAS, INC. (278196), AS TO THE BLOCK (00121) LEASE, WELL NO. 3W, PANHANDLE CARSON COUNTY FIELD, CARSON COUNTY, TEXAS**

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**FINAL ORDER**

The Commission finds that after statutory notice the captioned enforcement proceeding was heard by the examiner on October 11, 2007, and that the respondent, Fort Worth Natural Gas, Inc. (278196), failed to appear or respond to the notice. Pursuant to § 1.49 of the Commission's General Rules of Practice and Procedure [Tex. R. R. Comm'n, 16 TEX. ADMIN. CODE § 1.49] and after being duly submitted to the Railroad Commission of Texas at conference held in its offices in Austin, Texas, the Commission makes the following findings of fact and conclusions of law.

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Fort Worth Natural Gas, Inc. (278196), ("Respondent") was given Notice of Opportunity for Hearing by certified mail, addressed to the most recent P-5 address on the Form P-5 Organization Report, which was signed and returned to the Commission.
2. The returned certified receipt (green card) that was attached to the Original Complaint and the Notice of Opportunity for Hearing mailed to Respondent's most recent P-5 address was signed and returned to the Commission on August 30, 2007. The certified receipt has been on file with the Commission for 15 days, exclusive of the day of receipt and day of issuance.
3. On October 17, 2006, Respondent, a Corporation, filed an Organization Report with the Commission reporting that its officers consisted of the following individual(s): William R. Vahrenkamp, Jr., President; Chadwick R. Vahrenkamp, Vice-President; and Joshua C. Vahrenkamp, Vice-President.
4. William R. Vahrenkamp, Jr., was a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent, as defined by Texas Natural Resources Code Section 91.114, during the time period of the violations of Commission rules committed by respondent.
5. Chadwick R. Vahrenkamp, was a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent, as defined by Texas Natural Resources Code Section 91.114, during the time period of the violations of Commission rules committed by respondent.

6. Joshua C. Vahrenkamp, was a person in a position of ownership or control of respondent, as defined by Texas Natural Resources Code Section 91.114, during the time period of the violations of Commission rules committed by respondent.
7. The violations of Commission rules committed by respondent are related to safety and the control of pollution.
8. Respondent designated itself to the Commission as the operator of Well No. 3W on the Block (00121) Lease ("subject well"/"subject lease") by filing a Form P-4 (Producers Transportation Authority and Certificate of Compliance ) with the Commission effective on September 1, 2002.
9. According to Commission records the Respondent's Form P-5 (Organization Report) is active. Respondent has \$50,000 cash as its financial assurance.
10. Well No. 3W is a permitted injection well. Well No. 3W ceased injection activity on or before April 30, 1999..
11. The subject well has not been properly plugged in accordance with, and is not otherwise in compliance with, Statewide Rule 14.
12. Usable quality groundwater in the area is likely to be contaminated by migrations or discharges of saltwater and other oil and gas wastes from the subject well. Unplugged wellbores constitute a cognizable threat to the public health and safety because of the probability of pollution.
13. The estimated cost to the State of plugging Well No. 3W is \$8,300.00.
14. The Statewide Rule 14(b)(2) extension for Well No. 3W on the Block (00121) Lease was denied on October 17, 2006 for a failed or delinquent mechanical integrity test and a operator filing problem.
15. Well No. 3W on the Block (00121) Lease is a permitted saltwater injection well by UIC No. 37800, dated November 22, 1971. The Permit for Well No. 3W requires pressure tests on the well, with the test results reported to the Commission. Further Commission rules require any significant pressure changes at the well to be reported to the Commission. If a wellhead is not equipped with a pressure observation valve on the tubing and for each annulus of a well, an accurate pressure test cannot be made and the well cannot be monitored for any significant pressure changes that might indicate the presence of leaks in the well.
16. A Commission District inspection report dated April 10, 2007 for Well No. 3W on the Block (00121) Lease, showed that although the well was equipped with a tubing pressure observation valve, it was frozen in the open position, therefore rendering it inoperable.

17. A Commission District inspection report made on April 10, 2007 for the Block (00121) Lease indicated that Well No. 3W was inactive, not equipped to inject, and had no tubing flowline connected.
18. The Respondent has not timely performed a pressure test on the Block (00121) Lease, Well No. 3W as required by the well's injection permit and Statewide Rule 46(j).
19. The Respondent has not demonstrated good faith since it failed to plug or otherwise place the subject lease and subject well in compliance after being notified of the violations by the District Office and failed to appear at the hearing to explain its inaction.

### **CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

1. Proper notice was issued by the Railroad Commission to respondent and to all other appropriate persons legally entitled to notice.
2. All things necessary to the Commission attaining jurisdiction over the subject matter and the parties in this hearing have been performed or have occurred.
3. Respondent is in violation of Commission Statewide Rules 14(b)(2), 46(g)(2) and 46(j).
4. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 46(g)(2), which requires that the wellhead shall be equipped with a pressure observation valve on the tubing and for each annulus of the well.
5. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease in compliance with Statewide Rule 46(j), which requires that the mechanical integrity of an injection wells shall be evaluated by conducting pressure tests to determine whether the well tubing, packer or casing have sufficient mechanical integrity to meet performance standards.
6. Respondent is responsible for maintaining the subject lease and well in compliance with all applicable Commission rules according to Statewide Rules 14, 58, and 79 and Chapters 89 and 91 of the Texas Natural Resources Code.
7. The documented violations committed by the respondent constitute acts deemed serious, a hazard to the public health, and demonstrate a lack of good faith pursuant to TEX. NAT. RES. CODE ANN. §81.0531(c).
8. 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, William R. Vahrenkamp, Jr., and any other organization in which he may hold a position of ownership or control, shall be subject to the restrictions of Texas Natural Resource Code Section 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, whichever is earlier.

9. 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, Chadwick R. Vahrenkamp, and any other organization in which he may hold a position of ownership or control, shall be subject to the restrictions of Texas Natural Resource Code Section 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, whichever is earlier.
10. 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, Joshua C. Vahrenkamp, and any other organization in which he may hold a position of ownership or control, shall be subject to the restrictions of Texas Natural Resource Code Section 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, whichever is earlier.

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

1. Fort Worth Natural Gas, Inc. (278196), shall plug the Block (00121) Lease, Well No. 3W, Panhandle Carson County Field, Carson County, Texas in compliance with applicable Commission rules and regulations;
2. Fort Worth Natural Gas, Inc. (278196), shall pay to the Railroad Commission of Texas, for disposition as provided by law, an administrative penalty in the amount of **FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$5,000.00)**.

It is further **ORDERED** by the Commission that this order shall not be final and effective until 20 days after a party is notified of the Commission's order. A party is presumed to have been notified of the Commission's order three days after the date on which the notice is actually mailed. If a timely motion for rehearing 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 90 days from the date the parties are notified of the order.

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 \$10,000.00 per day per violation.

Done this 18th day of December 2007.

**RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS**

(Signatures affixed by Default Master Order dated December 18, 2007)

JD/sa