



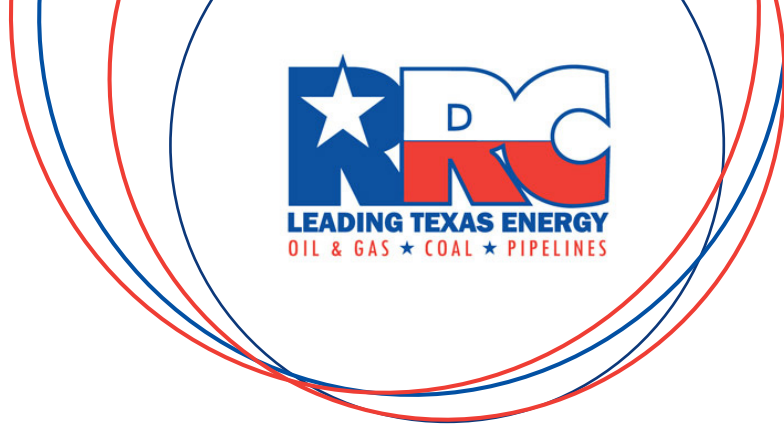
FEBRUARY 2024

Energy News



From the Field Photo

Lease Inspection in Pecos County
Photo from Jimmy Hernandez



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Upcoming Events

RRC Open Meeting.....Tuesday, March 19, 2024

[VIEW OPEN MEETING WEBCASTS ▶](#)

The RRC Plugs Uncontrolled Water Flow in Crane County

The Commission wrapped up a large-scale plugging project in Crane County, stopping an uncontrolled water flow that began in December.

Within hours of the water flow being reported, inspectors in West Texas were dispatched and construction began soon after. Lined pits and berms were utilized to contain the flow and protect freshwater from any threat.

The water flow was eventually stopped in January, and the well is now cased and cemented.

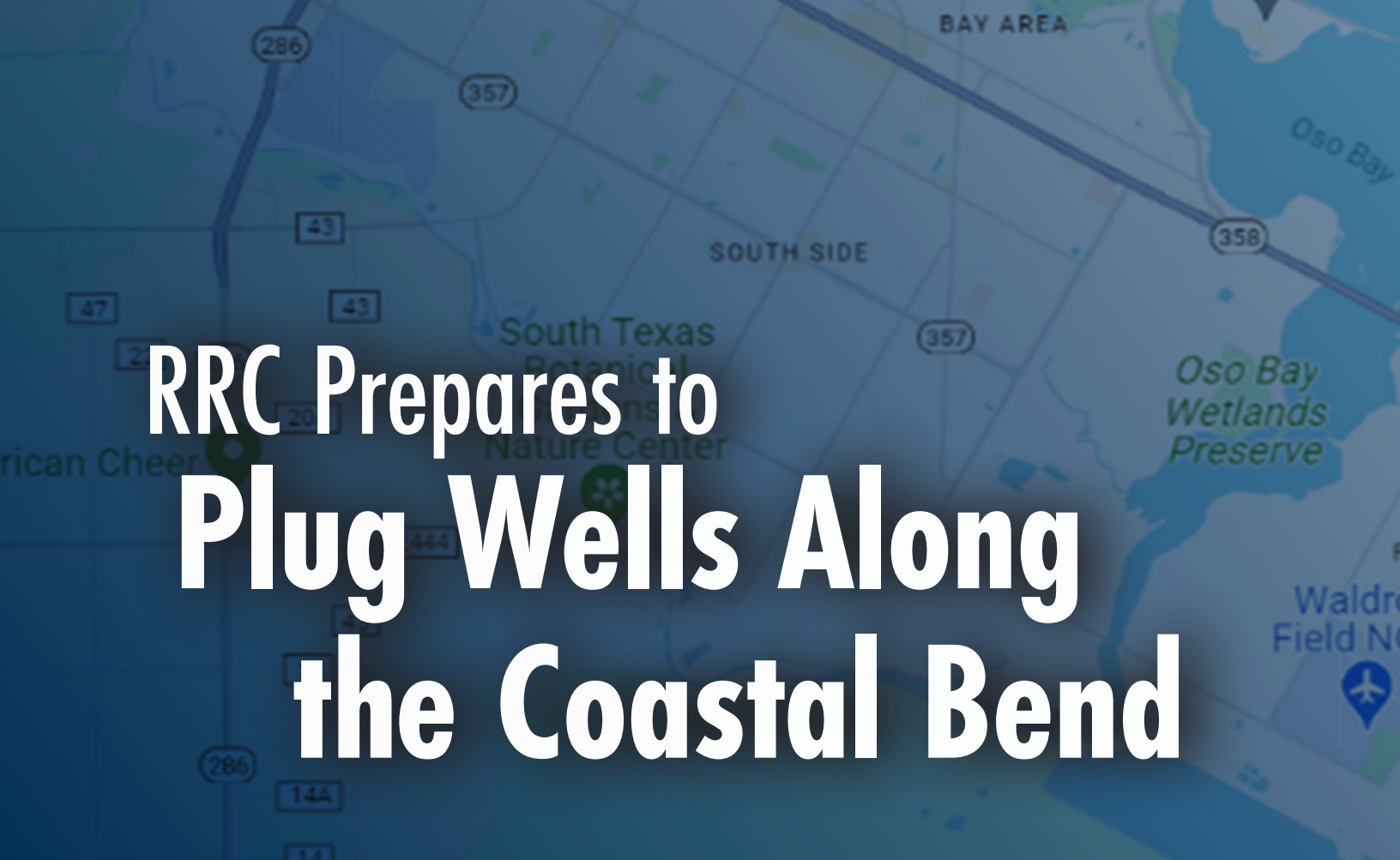
The agency has done extensive research, and the well is not on any RRC records, indicating no evidence that this is an oil and gas well. Water sampling further suggests this may not have been an oil and gas well.

The water sample had high salt content, which would not be surprising given the fact that the site is over the Salado Formation which is a salt formation.

Although there is no evidence to suggest this is an orphaned well, the RRC acted swiftly to stop the water flow in Crane County, and we will always make every effort possible to protect the environment and public safety.

We are continuing to investigate the historical geological features in the area and working with entities such as the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology for potential assistance in understanding historical geology.





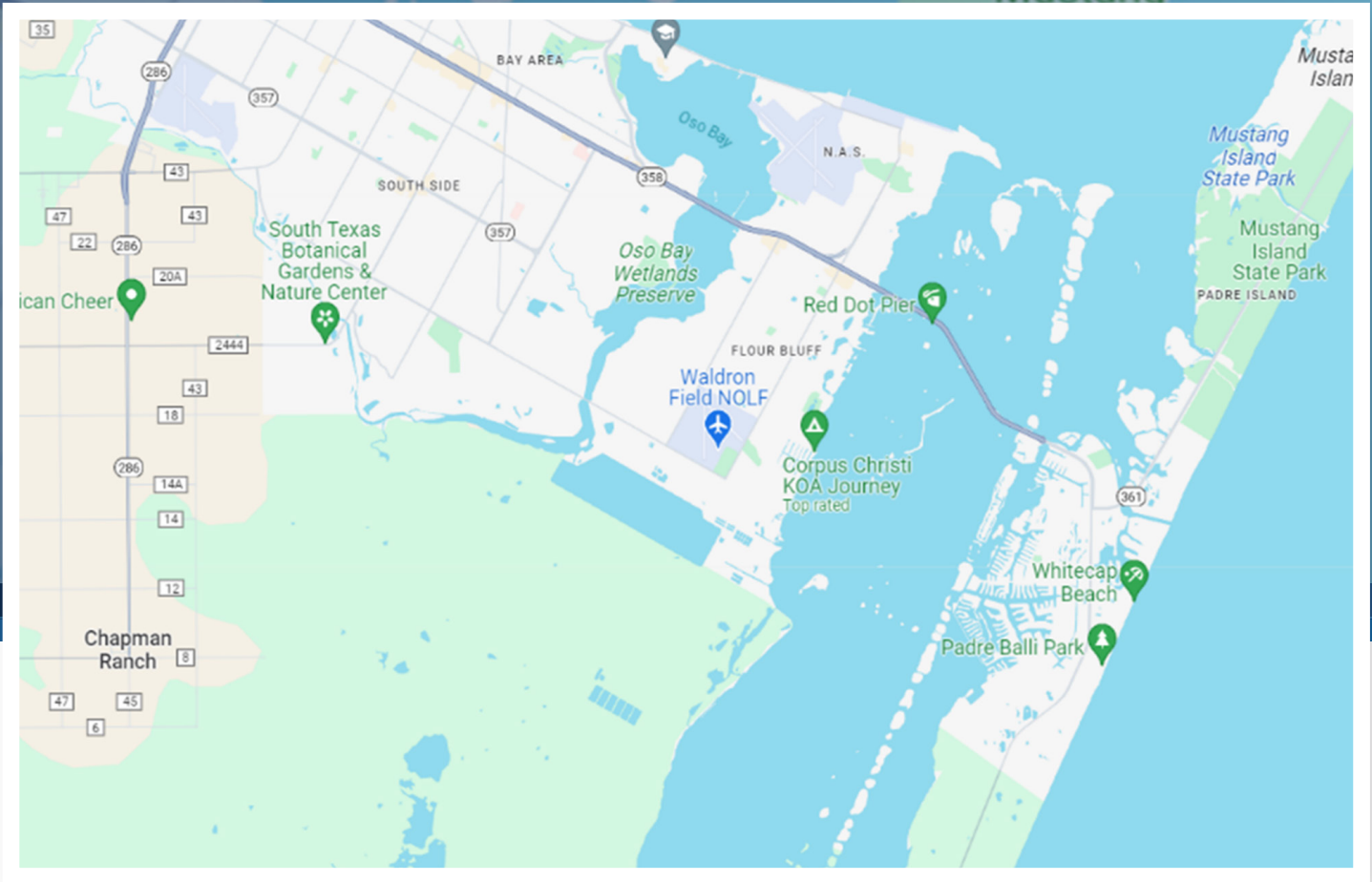
RRC Prepares to Plug Wells Along the Coastal Bend

The RRC will utilize the agency's well plugging program to plug orphan hard to reach orphan wells along the Coastal Bend in Baffin Bay, Humble Channel and Pita Island. The General Land Office, (GLO) reached out to the Commission for help to plug 10 wells in the area and will provide \$3 million to fund the project.

The orphan wells that need to be plugged are in extremely muddy conditions that require marsh buggies and specialized equipment to reach and plug the wells.

“We are proud to celebrate 40 years of the Commission's nationally recognized State Managed Plugging Program this year with more than 45,000 wells plugged since its inception,” said RRC Executive Director Wei Wang.

“Our extensive experience provides the Commission with the knowledge and skills that other state and federal agencies can depend on. The RRC is always willing to help in the important mission of protecting communities and the environment in our great state.”



Coastal Bend area where wells are located

The Commission has previously plugged a well for the GLO in the Bolivar Peninsula; and has assisted the National Park Service with projects in the Big Thicket National Preserve in East Texas and Padre Island National Seashore along the Gulf Coast.

The agency has exceeded the annual legislative goals for plugging wells for the last seven consecutive years and plans on continuing this impressive track record.



RRC Commissioners Vote to Legally Challenge EPA's Methane Rule

At their Open Meeting in late January, RRC Commissioners voted to refer the EPA's Methane Rule to the Office of the Attorney General to pursue a legal challenge. The rule imposes several new standards, including the EPA super-emitter program, which allows the monitoring and reporting of methane leaks by third parties to the EPA. The RRC has previously identified concerns that were expanded on in [comments it submitted in conjunction with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality](#).

Texas is a leader in oil and gas production and the United States is a global leader in reducing emissions. The Texas Methane and Flaring Coalition has noted that the Permian Basin in Texas has reduced methane emissions by more than 76 percent, while production increased more than 345 percent during the same time frame from 2011 to 2021.

The new rule is extremely unreasonable, and time-consuming, given that there have been vast improvements with reduced methane emissions in the state.

The new rules will create an undue burden on regulators as well as the oil and gas industry, by forcing further emission reductions in remote, unmanned locations.

Small business and minor operators have expressed their own concerns with the new regulations, because they will oust them out of business with compliance requirements that involve bygone oil wells that produce a small amount of oil.

The RRC referral is a request for the Office of the Attorney General to represent the Railroad Commission of Texas. Once the rule is published in the Federal Register, it will become effective 60 days later. The Commission will discuss the challenge in due course with the attorneys assigned to represent the agency.

CHRISTI CRADDICK, *CHAIRMAN*
WAYNE CHRISTIAN, *COMMISSIONER*
JIM WRIGHT, *COMMISSIONER*



ALEXANDER C. SCHOCH, *GENERAL COUNSEL*
GENERAL LAW SECTION

RAILROAD COMMISSION OF TEXAS OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

January 31, 2024

Mr. James Lloyd
Deputy Attorney General for Civil Litigation
P.O. Box 12548
Austin, TX 78711
James.Lloyd@oag.texas.gov
via electronic mail

Re: Standards of Performance for New, Reconstructed, and Modified Sources and Emissions
Guidelines for Existing Sources: Oil and Natural Gas Sector Climate Review, Final Rule
Docket ID EPA-HQ-OAR-2021-0317

Dear Mr. Lloyd:

On December 2, 2023, the Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) released its final New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for new and existing oil and gas facilities (commonly known as the “Methane Rule”).¹ The final rule will be effective 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register.

The initial proposal was published on November 15, 2021, and a supplemental proposal was published on December 6, 2022. The Railroad Commission of Texas (“Commission”) joined the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality in commenting on both the initial proposal and the supplemental proposal.

The Commission respectfully requests your representation in this matter. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me at 512.463.6977 or betsy.peticolas@rrc.texas.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Betsy Peticolas".

Betsy Peticolas
Attorney
Office of General Counsel
Railroad Commission of Texas

¹ Until the official version is published in the Federal Register, the prepublication version of the final rule is available at https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-12/ea12866_oil-and-gas-nsps-eg-climate-review-2060-av16-final-rule-20231130.pdf.



Chairman Craddick

COMMISSIONERS' CORNER



In February, Chairman Christi Craddick spoke with several important groups around the state about the importance of the Railroad Commission. These groups included delegations from Wylie, Rowlett, and Jacksonville, who took time to visit their state capitol to learn more about state government. Chairman Craddick was honored to speak to them about the role of the agency, the significant impact that oil and gas has on our economy, and the need to push back of federal overreach.

Additionally, Chairman Craddick was honored to be the keynote speaker at the Permian Basin Petroleum Association's membership luncheon, where she was able to provide updates on agency actions and discuss ways in which the Railroad Commission has pushed back against the federal administration's attack on oil and gas."



Commissioner Christian

COMMISSIONERS' CORNER



In February, Commissioner Christian sent a letter to the Texas Congressional Delegation encouraging them to support H.R. 7176, the Unlocking Domestic LNG Potential Act (Rep. August Pfluger TX-11). Rep. Pfluger's bill will put pressure on the Biden Administration to remove their political and unnecessary blockade on LNG export projects which are vital to Texas, America, and the world.

"U.S. LNG is life-saving energy to our allies, and I don't know about the president, but I'd much rather have the world buying American natural gas over foreign or hostile nations," said Commissioner Christian. "President Joe Biden's politically motivated pause on new LNG export projects hurts consumers, Texans' jobs, slows the U.S. economy, makes energy more expensive, and jeopardizes the lives our foreign allies."

H.R. 7176 passed the U.S. House of Representatives and awaits further action in the U.S. Senate. [Read more here.](#)

Additionally, the Commissioner released four new episodes of his podcast. [You can listen to the podcasts here.](#)





Commissioner Wright

COMMISSIONERS' CORNER

In February, Commissioner Wright spent time in Houston where he spoke with the Houston chapter of the International Right of Way Association (IRWA) about the importance of infrastructure projects and how delays in investment or permitting can have major implications on the economic future of our nation.

Later in the month, Commissioner Wright traveled to Washington, DC to attend the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) annual winter meeting.

As Chairman of the Pipeline Safety Subcommittee at NARUC, Commissioner Wright spent time with his fellow commissioners discussing pipeline safety reauthorization legislation currently being considered in Congress and the important role state and federal regulators have as it pertains to pipeline safety.



Oil & Gas Production Statistics

View monthly production totals of crude oil, condensate and total oil; and of gas well gas, casinghead gas, and total natural gas.

[VIEW CURRENT PRODUCTION STATISTICS ▶](#)

Enforcement Actions

The Commission has primary oversight and enforcement of the state's oil and gas industry and intrastate pipeline safety. View RRC's Latest Enforcement Actions here.

[VIEW LATEST ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS ▶](#)

Public GIS Viewer

The Public GIS Viewer allows users to view oil, gas and pipeline data in a map view.

[LAUNCH THE PUBLIC GIS VIEWER ▶](#)