

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 59th Legislature (2024)

SENATE BILL 1555

By: Boren

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to oil and gas wells; amending 17 O.S. 2021, Section 53.2, which relates to removal of debris and equipment; authorizing action for treble damages for certain noncompliance by a lease operator; allowing award of certain costs and fees; updating statutory language; updating statutory references; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 17 O.S. 2021, Section 53.2, is amended to read as follows:

Section 53.2. A. The Corporation Commission shall prescribe and promulgate rules and regulations which require the lease operator to remove all unnecessary operating equipment, structures, surface debris, abutment or obstacles used in the operation of the well from the land upon which the well is located, and shall grade or terrace the surface of the soil as required in this section unless the owner of the land and the lease operator have entered into a contract providing otherwise. Such removal shall apply to operators while laying pipeline or other transport equipment.

Provided, however, the provisions of this section shall not apply to Osage County.

1 B. Within twelve (12) months after the completion of a
2 producing well, the operator shall fill all the pits for containing
3 muds, cuttings, salt water or oil that are not needed for production
4 purposes or are not required by state or federal law or regulation
5 and shall remove all concrete bases, drilling supplies and drilling
6 equipment and all other equipment not necessary for producing ~~said~~
7 the well, excluding guy line anchors. Within such period, the
8 operator shall grade or terrace the land surface within the area
9 disturbed in siting, drilling, completing and producing the well
10 which land is not required in production of the well.

11 C. Within twelve (12) months after a well that has produced oil
12 or gas is plugged or after the plugging of a dry hole, the operator
13 shall remove all production and storage structures, supplies and
14 equipment and any oil, salt water and debris and fill any remaining
15 excavations. Within such period, the operator shall grade or
16 terrace the area disturbed.

17 D. The operator shall be released from responsibility to
18 perform any or all requirements of this section on any part or all
19 of the area disturbed upon the filing of a request for a waiver with
20 and obtaining the written approval of the Commission, which request
21 shall be signed by the surface owner to certify the approval of the
22 surface owner of the release sought. The Commission shall approve
23 such requests unless it finds upon inspection that the waiver would
24 be likely to result in substantial damage to adjoining property,

1 substantial contamination of surface or underground water or
2 substantial erosion or sedimentation. If the Commission refuses to
3 approve a request for waiver, it shall do so by order.

4 E. ~~This act~~ This section and Section 53.1 of this title shall
5 also apply to the operators of a secondary or enhanced oil recovery
6 unit that is or has been operated under a plan of unitization
7 approved by order of the ~~Oklahoma~~ Corporation Commission and
8 established by a proper certificate of effectiveness. Nothing
9 herein contained shall be construed to repeal the statutes governing
10 the establishment and operation of such secondary or enhanced
11 recovery unit.

12 F. The Commission may, upon written application by an operator
13 showing reasonable cause, extend the period within which restoration
14 shall be completed, but not to exceed a further six-month period,
15 except under extraordinarily adverse weather conditions or when
16 essential equipment, fuel or labor is unavailable to the operator.
17 If the Commission refuses to approve a request for waiver or
18 extension, it shall do so by order.

19 G. The provisions of this section shall also apply to the
20 drilling of or conversion to a saltwater disposal or injection well
21 and to any operation in connection with reentering or reworking any
22 oil and gas well or saltwater injection or disposal well.

23 H. In the event that a lease operator does not comply with the
24 provisions of this section, a surface owner may file an action

1 against the lease operator for treble damages for such
2 noncompliance. The court may also award costs and reasonable
3 attorney fees.

4 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2024.

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