

BEFORE THE INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

CASE NO. 3937
ORDER NO. 4483

IN THE MATTER OF A HEARING CALLED ON A
MOTION OF THE COMMISSION TO CONSIDER THE
APPLICATION OF THE LOUISIANA LAND &
EXPLORATION COMPANY FOR AN ORDER TO
PERMIT THE FLARING OF GAS PRODUCED FROM
CERTAIN OIL WELLS LOCATED IN THE AMBROSE
FIELD, DIVIDE COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA, AS AN
EXCEPTION TO SECTION 38-08-06.4 NORTH DAKOTA
CENTURY CODE.

ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

BY THE COMMISSION:

Pursuant to legal notice this cause came on for hearing at 9:00 a.m. on the 24th day of April, 1986, in Bismarck, North Dakota, before an examiner appointed by the Industrial Commission of North Dakota, hereinafter referred to as the "Commission."

NOW, on this 5th day of May, 1986, the Commission, a quorum being present, having considered the testimony adduced and the exhibits received at said hearing, and being fully advised in the premises,

FINDS:

(1) That due public notice having been given as required by law, the Commission has jurisdiction of this cause and the subject matter thereof.

(2) That Section 38-08-06.4 of the North Dakota Century Code states:

As permitted under rules of the industrial commission, gas produced with crude oil from an oil well may be flared during a one-year period from the date of first production from the well, or until June 30, 1986, for wells in production prior to July 1, 1985. Thereafter, flaring of gas from the well must cease and the well must either be capped or connected to a gas gathering line. For a well operated in violation of this section, the producer shall pay royalties to royalty owners and gross production tax imposed under section 57-51-02 upon the value of the flared gas. The industrial commission shall enforce this section and, for each well operator found to be in violation of this section, shall determine the value of flared gas for purposes of payment of gross production tax and royalties under this section and its determination is final. A producer may obtain an exemption from this section from the industrial commission upon application and a showing that connection of the well to a natural gas gathering line is economically infeasible at the time of the application or in the foreseeable future or that a market for the gas is not available.

(3) That applicant is the operator ("producer") of the following wells in the Ambrose-Duperow Pool, Divide County, North Dakota:

Almos #11-23, Section 23, T.163N., R.99W.

Bublitz 42-22 #1, Section 22, T.163N., R.99W.

Bublitz 34-22 #2, Section 22, T.163N., R.99W.

Ness 41-23 #1, Section 23, T.163N., R.99W.

State Henning 32-14 #1, Section 14, T.163N., R.99W.

Torgeson 34-15 #1, Section 15, T.163N., R.99W.

(4) That the Ambrose-Duperow Pool is an oil reservoir, but gas is produced in association with crude oil at the wellhead as a by-product of oil production.

(5) That the wells are currently connected to a gas gathering pipeline and liquid extracting plant; however, gas is flared at the plant.

(6) That the applicant has submitted evidence that under current market conditions the surplus casinghead gas presently being produced by the wells and the estimated recoverable reserves from the wells are insufficient to recoup the costs of installing and operating a gas gathering facility.

(7) That if the applicant's request in this matter is not granted, royalties and tax must be paid on the flared gas from the above described wells, or flaring must cease and the wells must be "capped", resulting in the loss of oil production and the loss of the benefits of that production by all owners of interest in the wells and the State of North Dakota.

(8) That considering the amount of surplus gas being produced by the wells and the amount of estimated recoverable reserves from the wells, it is economically infeasible at this time to connect the wells to a gas gathering facility.

(9) That current conditions and circumstances relative to gas production, reserves, price and market, may change; hence, any exemptions granted should be limited in duration.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

(1) That the applicant is hereby allowed to flare surplus casinghead gas produced with crude oil from the Ambrose-Duperow Pool through the wells listed in (3) of the findings as an exception to the provisions of Section 38-08-06.4 of the North Dakota Century Code.

(2) That the Enforcement Officer shall have the authority to administratively approve an application to extend the provisions of this order.

(3) That this order shall continue in full force and effect until the 1st day of June, 1987, unless modified by further order of the Commission or unless extended by administrative approval of the Enforcement Officer upon application by the operator and a showing that conditions and circumstances prevailing at the time of the hearing still exist.

Dated this 5th day of May, 1986.

INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

/s/ George A. Sinner _
George A. Sinner, Governor

Nicholas J. Spaeth, Attorney General

/s/ Kent Jones _
Kent Jones, Commissioner of Agriculture