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GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF CONSERVATION

STEPHEN CHUSTZ
INTERIM SECRETARY

JAMES H. WELSH
COMMISSIONER OF CONSERVATION

To: Louisiana Licensed Water Well, Geotechnical Borehole and Groundwater Monitoring Well Drillers

From: James H. Welsh
Commissioner of Conservation 

Date: September 10, 2012

Subject: Presence of Natural Gas in the Mississippi River Alluvial Aquifer Bayou Corne Area, Assumption Parish, Louisiana

Dear Drillers:

The Office of Conservation received notice of the presence of a pocket of natural gas located at the top of Mississippi River Alluvial aquifer encountered during installation of a geotechnical borehole at the Texas Brine Co., LLC OXY GEISMER 002 brine solution mining well site, 30° 0' 35.535" N, 91° 8' 23.065" W, in the Bayou Corne area in Assumption parish. Natural gas bubbles have also been detected in several locations in area bayous, other surface water features and in a nearby sinkhole. Note that the exact lateral extent of the presence of natural gas in the Mississippi River Alluvial aquifer underlying the Bayou Corne area is not known at this time. Therefore, notice is hereby being provided to advise that if drilling in the Bayou Corne area, all measures necessary to minimize health and safety hazards are taken and to remind you of the attached Guidance Statement (ENV-GS-06) previously distributed to licensed drillers informing of proper procedure to report the observance of naturally occurring methane or natural gas during well construction. If you have any questions, please contact our office at 225-342-8244.

JHW:GWS:bmm
Attachment (copied on reverse side of this memo)



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State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
OFFICE OF CONSERVATION
OFFICE OF CONSERVATION
ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

ROBERT D. HARPER
SECRETARY

JAMES H. WELSH
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INTRA-OFFICE GUIDANCE STATEMENT

GUIDANCE NO.: ENV-GS-06

EFFECTIVE DATE: May 20, 2010

SUBJECT: Procedure to report the observance of naturally occurring methane or natural gas during water well construction.

PURPOSE: Provides clarification as to the necessity and procedure for reporting any observable evidence of the presence of naturally occurring methane or natural gas during water well, geotechnical borehole or ground water monitoring well construction.

GUIDANCE: Louisiana Revised Statute 38:3098 et seq. and LAC Title 56 require contractors drilling water well, geotechnical borehole or ground water monitoring wells to, among other things, record any unusual occurrences, such as loss of circulation, cave-ins, etc., as well as, take all measures necessary to minimize health and safety hazards. Additionally, those statutes require this office to collect, catalog and store water well construction and drilling data.

It is known that the presence of naturally occurring methane or natural gas exists in ground water of certain aquifers of the State; namely in the Chicot aquifer in the Lake Charles area of Calcasieu Parish; and in the Sparta aquifer in Southeast Union Parish.

Considering the above statutory mandates and the potential safety hazards associated with the uncontrolled release of naturally occurring methane or natural gas, all licensed drillers and contractors encountering or having knowledge of any situation where observable evidence, such as bubbling drilling mud or gas venting at the well bore or other nearby surface location or feature, indicating the possible presence of naturally occurring methane, natural gas or a similar subsurface gas pressure release shall report such an event verbally to the Environmental Division of the Office of Conservation within twenty-four (24) hours.

APPROVED BY: Gary W. Snellgrove
Gary W. Snellgrove, Director
Environmental Division

APPROVED BY: James H. Welsh
James H. Welsh
Commissioner of Conservation