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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oil & Gas Exploration & Production Well Operators/Water Well Owners

FROM: Steven M. Giambrone, Office of Conservation

DATE: November 27, 2024

SUBJECT: Water Sourcing Requirements for Considerations; Department of Energy & Natural Resources Surface Water Management Program
Office of Conservation Water Well Notification & Evaluation Requirements

This Memorandum is issued to inform and advise oil and gas exploration and production (O&G E&P) well operators and water well owners on regulatory matters pertaining to water sourcing and use of surface and groundwater resources from Louisiana's surface waters and aquifer systems at O&G E&P sites.

The Office of Conservation encourages the wise and judicious selection and use of water from Louisiana's surface waters and groundwater resources necessary for safe and productive Louisiana O&G E&P operations.

Louisiana provides a mechanism for withdrawal and use of surface waters of the State of Louisiana. Pursuant to Louisiana's Revised Statutes 30:961-963, the Department of Energy & Natural Resources staffs and implements the Surface Water Management Program. Additional information, documentation and application for a surface water withdrawal Cooperative Endeavor Agreement is found at LDENR's Surface Water Management website at: www.dnr.la.gov/swu.

Groundwater withdrawal and use at O&G E&P sites is regulated and managed by the Office of Conservation. Additional information for the Office of Conservation's Groundwater Resources Program is found at: www.dnr.la.gov/wellowners.

Specific regulatory guidance for drilling rig supply wells and ground water use for purposes other than drilling rig supply at O&G E&P sites is found at the webpage link above and provided on the back of this Memorandum for your convenience.

Groundwater Well and Use Requirements

Louisiana Revised Statute 38:3097.3 and LAC 43:VI.701 require that 60 days prior to drilling of a water well, Water Well Notification Form (GWR-01) must be submitted by the well owner to the Office of Conservation (OC). There are four well types: drilling rig supply wells, domestic wells, replacement wells, and drought relief wells, that well owners are not required to provide notice to OC sixty (60) days prior to drilling.

As the law states, drilling rig supply wells are “used only for the duration of the oil and gas drilling operation at the drilling location where sited for the immediate needs of rig operations.” La. R.S. 38:3097.3.C.(4)(a)(iii). A water well drilled at an oil or gas drilling site, to supply water for drilling activities, shall be considered an abandoned well immediately after the termination of the oil and gas drilling operations and removal of the rig from the site. An abandoned rig supply well is the responsibility of the owner and shall be P&A within 30 calendar days after the termination of driller operations, LAC 56:I 527.A.5. Refer to LAC 56:I.531 for requirements regarding the plugging and abandoning water wells.

LAC 43:VI.703.B.l.c. requires notification of change in information including transfers of ownership and/or changes of well use or type. All notifications of change of information to a well or well type, which is not exempt from the sixty (60) days prior notification requirement of LAC 43:VI.701.B, must be submitted to OC at least sixty (60) days prior to the change in the well use or well type. (See NOTE).

All water well notifications or change of information amendments must be submitted with a properly completed Water Well Notification Form (GWR-0I) (by the owner or authorizing agent). Registration via Water Well Registration Form (GW- 1 or GW-IS) is required to be submitted by the driller for all new water wells within 30 days after completion pursuant to LAC 56:I. et seq. LAC 43:VI.701.A. Submit completed forms by mail or e-mail to the contact information provided below.

NOTE: Water wells used for supplying hydraulic fracturing operations at O&G E&P sites, also known as Frac Water Supply Wells, do not meet the definition of drilling rig supply wells and well owners shall therefore provide notification to the Office of Conservation sixty (60) days prior to drilling. Frac supply wells are considered industrial use water wells and require full depth grout.

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Forms: <https://www.dnr.louisiana.gov/page/con-forms-environmental-division>

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