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To: [Rules Coordinator](#)
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Subject: Proposed Changes to Rule 8 - A Landowner Perspective
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Dear Commissioners,

I am commenting, as a landowner, on the proposed changes to Rule 8 regarding the practice of lined drilling pits and the on-site disposal of drilled rock cuttings.

This has been a standard practice for decades (and probably since this industry began). I am unaware of any issue regarding groundwater contamination or any pollution issues regarding this practice. The only complaint I've ever even heard about is when the plastic lining gets torn and blows around and becomes a nuisance and a hazard (for cattle) when not removed at the end of drilling operations.

The damage done by the excess trucking required is detrimental to the land, highways and people (as well as an expensive waste of fuel, trucks and man-power). Additionally, the limited amount of closed-loop storage tanks would likely be inadequate should an unforeseen water-flow occur without a back-up ground pit.

I am a large landowner in Gray, Roberts, Carson and Hutchinson counties with some additional smaller holdings in Hansford, Hemphill and Ochiltree counties of the Texas panhandle (District 10). This rule change appears to be an expensive solution looking for a problem that doesn't exist.

Why you have selected this change is a bit baffling to me. There are numerous problems within the Railroad Commission regarding regulations and enforcement, but this is not one I have had issue with. The proposed rule will create more problems than it will fix. The additional truck traffic alone will expose more Texans to the biggest killer in the oilfield; highway fatalities (26.8%).

There are many issues that are of significant concern including produced saltwater spills, bonding requirements that allow shady operators to bankrupt out of their obligations, not requiring casing integrity tests (allowing gas to leak and fresh water to escape), and the apparent ill-defined rolls of the Austin office and the Pampa office (when I contact either office, they always claim it is the other office's roll and the back-and-forth begins). Also, false filing regarding power disconnects, shut-in wells and fluid level tests just to name a few.

Feel free to call me anytime at (281) 222-4987 if you want to discuss the proposed Rule 8 change or any other issues regarding the environment and enforcement.

Thank you,
Sherman Smith

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