

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 59th Legislature (2023)

3 SENATE BILL 629

By: Howard

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to oil and gas operators; amending 17  
8 O.S. 2021, Section 53.2, which relates to rules and  
9 regulations for surface reclamation; requiring  
10 certain operators to obtain written permission or  
11 surface damage settlement prior to closing or capping  
12 certain well; and providing an effective date.

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

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

15 Section 53.2. A. 1. The Corporation Commission shall  
16 prescribe and promulgate rules and regulations which require the  
17 lease operator to remove all unnecessary operating equipment,  
18 structures, surface debris, abutment or obstacles used in the  
19 operation of the well from the land upon which the well is located,  
20 and shall grade or terrace the surface of the soil as required in  
21 this section unless the owner of the land and the lease operator  
22 have entered into a contract providing otherwise. Provided,  
23 however, the provisions of this section shall not apply to Osage  
24 County.

1        2. Prior to the plugging or capping of a well in this state,  
2 the operator shall have written permission for such closure or a  
3 surface damage settlement agreement with the landowner or lessee  
4 under which the operator is operating.

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

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

21        D. The operator shall be released from responsibility to  
22 perform any or all requirements of this section on any part or all  
23 of the area disturbed upon the filing of a request for a waiver with  
24 and obtaining the written approval of the Commission, which request

1 shall be signed by the surface owner to certify the approval of the  
2 surface owner of the release sought. The Commission shall approve  
3 such requests unless it finds upon inspection that the waiver would  
4 be likely to result in substantial damage to adjoining property,  
5 substantial contamination of surface or underground water or  
6 substantial erosion or sedimentation. If the Commission refuses to  
7 approve a request for waiver, it shall do so by order.

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

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

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

3 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective November 1, 2023.  
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