



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Managing California's Working Lands

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

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PROPOSED REGULATIONS FOR WELL STIMULATION TREATMENT IN OIL, NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION ARE NOW AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW, COMMENT

Hearings for Comments to be Held in Five Cities in January

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Conservation (DOC) today sent out public notice of proposed regulations for well stimulation treatment for oil and gas production. The public notice begins the formal rulemaking process and marks the beginning of a 60-day public comment period, with a likely additional 45-day public comment period later in 2014.

Comments regarding the proposed regulations can be submitted via email to DOGGRRegulations@conservation.ca.gov; via FAX to (916) 324-0948; or via regular mail to the Department of Conservation Office of Governmental and Environmental Relations, 801 K Street MS 24-02, 95814, ATTN: Well Stimulation Regulations.

“These proposed regulations implement Senate Bill 4, which was signed into law in September, and also supplement existing regulations that protect health, safety and the environment through strong well construction standards,” Department of Conservation Director Mark Nechodom said. “We believe that once these proposed regulations go into effect at the start of 2015, we will have in place the strongest environmental and public health protections of any oil- and gas-producing state in the nation while also ensuring that a key element of California’s economy can maintain its productivity.”

Added State Oil & Gas Supervisor Tim Kustic, head of DOC’s Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources: “The proposed regulations address a comprehensive list of issues, including testing, monitoring, public notice, and permitting. We will also have emergency regulations in place by January 1, 2014 to ensure that the major requirements of SB 4 are addressed in the interim.”

The text of the proposed regulations can be found at <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/Index/Pages/Index.aspx>

or <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/dog/Pages/Index.aspx>. They are the product of a dozen public meetings to both solicit ideas on what the regulations ought to include and to receive comments on an unofficial “discussion draft” of the regulations; extensive research of other states’ regulations and scientific studies; and input from other regulatory agencies, the environmental community, and the oil and gas industry.

Among the highlights of the proposed regulations:

- Oil and/or gas well operators must apply for a permit from the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources in order to conduct specified well stimulation operations. The information required in the permit application includes an evaluation of the condition of the well’s cement and a list of the chemicals to be used along with the estimated maximum concentrations.
- The Division will post all well stimulation permits on its Web site within five days of approval.
- An operator must provide written notice to all neighbors of the proposed project site at least 30 days in advance of well stimulation. Anyone who owns a water well can ask the operator to hire an independent party to conduct baseline and follow-up water quality testing.
- Before well stimulation can occur, an operator must do an analysis of other nearby wells and earthquake faults to prevent the migration of fluids, verify the integrity of the cement in the well, and also pressure-test the subject well and equipment that will be used (125 percent of maximum fracturing pressure for at least 30 minutes).
- Several key factors – including pressures and flow rates -- must be continuously monitored during well stimulation operations, and the conditions under which stimulation must immediately cease are laid out. The operator’s post-stimulation monitoring responsibilities also are enumerated.
- When storing and handling well stimulation fluids, operators must comply with all applicable requirements of the Regional Water Board, the Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the Air Quality Management District.
- Within 60 days after a well stimulation operation ends, an operator must post certain information to www.fracfocus.com or another chemical disclosure registry approved by the Division. That data includes the trade name, supplier, and a brief description of the intended purpose of each additive contained in the well stimulation fluid.
- Operators must file a post-operation report with the Division within 60 days of completing well stimulation operations. That report must include data from the U.S. Geological Survey for an earthquake of magnitude 2.0 or greater in the area of the operation.

Comments will also be taken at five public hearings around the state:

Sacramento – January 6, Sierra Room, California Environmental Protection Agency Building, 10th & I streets, 3-7p.m.

Long Beach – January 6, California State University Long Beach Auditorium, 1212 Bellflower Boulevard, 3-7p.m.

Bakersfield – January 8, Kern County Administrative Center, First Floor Board Chambers, 1115 Truxtun Avenue, 3-7 p.m.

Salinas – January 8, National Steinbeck Center, One Main Street, 3-7p.m.

Santa Maria – January 13, Santa Barbara County Supervisors Hearing Room, 511 East Lakeside Parkway, 3-7 p.m.

The Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources must certify an environmental analysis of SB 4 by July 1, 2015. Also, the Natural Resources Agency must commission an independent scientific study of well stimulation by January 1, 2015. A timeline for the study is being developed.

“California is known worldwide for its leadership in environmental issues, and we are proposing these regulations with that legacy in mind,” DOC Director Nechodom said.

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