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HOUSE BILL NO. 1222

House Amendments in [] — February 14, 1998

A BILL to amend and reenact § 45.1-361.17 of the Code of Virginia, relating to statewide spacing of gas and oil wells.

Patrons—Stump, Kilgore, Phillips and Tate; Senator: Reasor

Referred to Committee on Mining and Mineral Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 45.1-361.17 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 45.1-361.17. Statewide spacing of wells.

A. Unless prior approval has been received from the Board or a provision of the field or pool rules so allows:

1. Wells drilled in search of oil shall not be located closer than 1,250 feet to any well completed in the same pool; however, this spacing requirement is subject to § 45.1-361.12;

2. Wells drilled in search of gas shall not be located closer than 2,500 feet to any other well completed in the same pool, or closer than 2,500 feet to any storage well within the boundary of a gas storage field certificated by the State Corporation Commission prior to January 1, 1997, if the well to be drilled is to be completed within the same horizon as the certificated gas storage field; and

3. A well shall not be drilled closer to the boundary of the acreage supporting the well, whether such acreage is a single leasehold or other tract or a contractual or statutory drilling unit, than one-half of the minimum well spacing distances prescribed in this section.

B. Unless prior approval has been received from the Board or a provision of the field or pool rules so allows:

1. Wells drilled in search of coalbed methane gas shall not be located closer than 1,000 feet to any other coalbed methane gas well, or in the case of coalbed methane gas wells located in the gob, such wells shall not be located closer than 500 feet to any other coalbed methane gas wells located in the gob.

2. A coalbed methane gas well shall not be drilled closer than 500 feet, or in the case of such well located in the gob, not closer than 250 feet, from the boundary of the acreage supporting the well, whether such acreage is a single leasehold or other tract or a contractual or statutory drilling unit.

3. The spacing limitations set forth in this subsection are subject to the provisions of §§ 45.1-361.11 and 45.1-361.12.

C. ~~[No well shall be drilled within 750 feet of the boundary of any cemetery, except that the Board may grant an exception in any of the following circumstances:~~

~~1. The cemetery is a private cemetery and the person requesting the exception has received written permission from every person with any property interest in the cemetery.~~

~~2. The cemetery is a public cemetery and the person requesting the exception demonstrates that an emergency exists which can only be addressed by drilling a well within 750 feet of the boundary of the cemetery. The operator of any coalbed methane well drilled within 250 feet of a cemetery shall comply with a written request of any person owning an interest in a private cemetery or the authorized agent of a public cemetery that the operator of such well suspend operations for a period from two hours before to two hours after any burial service that takes place on the surface area of such cemetery. However, if the well operator or a mine operator determines that that suspension of such operations will have an adverse effect on the safety of the well operations or mining operations, the operator shall be under no obligation to comply with the request, and operation of the well shall continue.]~~

ENGROSSED

HB1222E