

# PIIONEER

NATURAL RESOURCES

January 11, 2021

United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 6  
Attn: Ms. Kilty Baskin, NPDES/Wetland Review Section (R6 WD-PN)  
1201 Elm Street, Suite 500  
Dallas, TX 75270

*Submitted electronically via [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)*

**Re: *Public Notice of State of Texas' Submittal to EPA of Request for Partial National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program Authorization for Oil and Gas Discharges (EPA-R06-OW-2020-0608; FRL-10017-34-Region 6) 85 Fed. Reg. 76,073 (Nov. 27, 2020)***

Ms. Baskin,

Pioneer Natural Resources USA, Inc. ("Pioneer") appreciates the opportunity to submit the following comments to the United States Environmental Protection Agency's ("EPA" or "the Agency") Public Notice of the State of Texas' Submittal of Request for Partial NPDES Program Authorization for Oil and Gas Discharges, 85 Fed. Reg. 76,073 (Nov. 27, 2020).

Pioneer is a large independent oil and gas exploration and production company headquartered in Dallas, Texas. The Company employs approximately 1,850 people and produces approximately 430,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day. Pioneer is a Permian pure-play company operating exclusively in the Midland and Delaware Basins in West Texas. Pioneer's assets include the Sprayberry/ Wolfcamp Trend Areas where it is the largest operator.

As a long-standing member of the American Exploration and Production Council ("AXPC"), a national trade association representing 25 of the largest independent oil and natural gas exploration and production companies in the United States, Pioneer endorses AXPC's formally submitted comments on this matter. AXPC supports efforts at both the state and federal level to encourage an expanded range of responsible discharge options for treated oil and gas wastewater. Pioneer is actively engaged in extensive reuse and recycle efforts throughout the Company's operations and urges all policymakers to continuously weigh the practical costs and benefits of the various options related to oil and gas wastewater in order to encourage innovation in water treatment technologies and sustainable practices.

Pioneer agrees with AXPC that Texas' request for permitting authority would not change the substance of any applicable water quality standards or source-category specific effluent limits that are controlled by more stringent federal statutes. Additionally, AXPC notes that the Memorandum of Agreement between EPA and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality ("TCEQ") that accompanies the State's application will ensure an appropriate delineation of federal and state authority. Further, unifying NPDES permitting responsibilities under TCEQ will help provide a

unified, streamlined regulatory experience for companies under TCEQ's jurisdiction and reduce duplication. This will ensure responsible, environmentally-sound resource development and minimize unnecessary or counterproductive regulatory burdens while providing a vital resource.

The Clean Water Act provides that EPA shall approve a states' request to administer its own discharge permitting program, so long as the state in question has the required legal authorities. *See* 33 U.S.C. § 1342(b). That is the case here, and so EPA should promptly grant Texas' request.

Please contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gretchen C. Kern". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Gretchen C. Kern  
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