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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Statement on Oil Conservation Commission produced water rules**

On July 31<sup>st</sup> the Oil Conservation Commission (OCC) deliberated on draft rule language to align existing OCD rules governing produced water with 2019's Produced Water Act. The proposed rules were a legal change designed to ensure alignment with the Produced Water Act as well as require additional reporting to better track the types and volumes of water used within oil and gas industry operations. As was testified during the hearing, gathering this type of data will provide the OCD with sound information to use in future produced water rulemakings. At the end of two days of hearing, the Commission deliberated upon all the proposed changes by the OCD as well as the suggestions made by multiple other parties in the case. The final draft of the rules incorporated suggestions from the public and other parties submitted during the hearing.

At the end of the deliberation, Chair Adrienne Sandoval stated that while there were interesting proposals from parties, they could not be considered because they were not within the parameters of the initial proposals. However, this as well as the statement from EMNRD General Counsel Brancard that the Division sees this rulemaking as the first phase of rules, leaves the door open to future rulemakings on produced water. Following deliberation, the Commission directed Commission Counsel to draft a final order to be reviewed and voted upon at the September 3<sup>rd</sup> special meeting of the Commission.

Produced water is a topic of great concern to the public and this administration and the rules under consideration are only the first step in additional produced water regulation. The new rules lay the groundwork for additional rulemakings that will further protect the environment and regulate the oil and gas industry. Better data collection will provide the OCD with more information on current water use practices and ensure that future proposals are based upon science and data. The final draft proposal in no way authorizes the use of produced water outside of the oil and gas industry and further clarified that no surface application of produced water or recycled produced water will be allowed within the oil and gas industry.

Public engagement is a key part of rulemakings and EMNRD values the constructive comments submitted. This administration will continue to promote a transparent and collaborative approach to our important work protecting the environment.

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