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Independent Review Completed of Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Office of Conservation Program Regulating Hydraulic Fracturing of Oil & Gas Wells

BATON ROUGE, La.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--A targeted review of the Louisiana program regulating the hydraulic fracturing of oil and gas wells has been completed by a multi-stakeholder group, which has concluded that the program is, over all, well-managed and also made recommendations for improvements in the program.

The review was conducted by a six-person team appointed by STRONGER, Inc., a non-profit organization that conducts voluntary state reviews of oil and natural gas environmental regulations. The review team, appointed in October 2010, consisted of three members and three observers representing environmental groups, state regulators and the oil and gas industry. Thirteen additional people attended the review.

"The review team has concluded that the Louisiana hydraulic fracturing program is, over all, well-managed, professional and meeting its program objectives," said Lori Wrotenbery, Director of the Oil and Gas Conservation Division of the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, who served as chairman of the review team. "We believe several aspects of the Office of Conservation and its operations merit special recognition."

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The Louisiana hydraulic fracturing regulatory program was singled out for its operations in the areas of prompt review of policies and adjustment of regulations in response to Haynesville Shale development, water resource use monitoring and reporting, actions to increase recycling opportunities, and public education and outreach.

The review team has also made recommendations for improvements to the Office of Conservation hydraulic fracturing program concerning the review of casing and cementing standards, including surface casing requirements; immediate reporting of problems and subsequent reporting of volumes, pressures and materials used; structured training for field inspectors; and spill prevention and control plans.

The review team members, in addition to Lori Wrotenbery, were Bruce Baizel, Earthworks Oil and Gas Accountability Project, and Jim Collins, a petroleum engineer representing the Independent Petroleum Association of America. Gil Bujano, Texas Railroad Commission; Doug Daigle, a Conservation Consultant from Baton Rouge; and Richard Metcalf, Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association participated as observers.

Copies of the Louisiana Hydraulic Fracturing Review are available by contacting Michael Nickolaus by email at mnickolaus@gwpc.org, by phone at (405) 516-4972, or downloading from the STRONGER website at www.strongerinc.org.

About STRONGER

The name, STRONGER, is an acronym for State Review of Oil and Natural Gas Environmental Regulations. STRONGER was formed in 1999 to reinvigorate and carry forward the state review process begun cooperatively in 1988 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission (IOGCC).

The mission of STRONGER is to educate and provide services for the continuous improvement of regulatory programs and industry practices in order to enhance human health and the environment. STRONGER is a non-profit, multi-stakeholder organization which shares innovative techniques and environmental protection strategies and identifies opportunities for program improvement. The state review process is a non-regulatory program and relies on states to volunteer for reviews.

Notes to Editors:

- The earliest drilling for petroleum in Louisiana occurred in the early 1900s
- Hydraulic fracturing has been a well completion practice since the 1950s
- According to the Office of Conservation there have been no documented instances of hydraulic fracturing affecting groundwater in Louisiana

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