

**THE STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF KANSAS**

Before Commissioners: Andrew J. French, Chairperson
Dwight D. Keen
Annie Kuether

In the matter of the application of Merit Energy) Docket No: 24-CONS-3390-CUNI
Company, LLC, for an order authorizing the)
unitization and unit operation of the Farmers Ditch) CONSERVATION DIVISION
Unit to be located in Finney County, Kansas.)
_____) License No: 32446

**ORDER DESIGNATING PRESIDING OFFICER
AND SETTING PREHEARING CONFERENCE**

The Commission rules as follows:

1. On June 20, 2024, Merit Energy Company, LLC (Operator) filed an application as described in the above caption. Under K.S.A. 77-551(c), the Commission finds a Presiding Officer should be designated in this proceeding to determine procedural matters that may arise prior to a hearing on the merits, including but not limited to conducting prehearing conferences.¹
2. The Commission finds a prehearing conference should be scheduled.
3. Under K.A.R. 82-1-228(d)(1), any party may either “appear before the Commission and be heard in person on that party’s own behalf,” or appear before the Commission through a licensed attorney. Because Operator is an artificial entity, it cannot appear in person.² Thus, Commission regulations require artificial entities such as Operator to appear before the Commission via counsel. Even if Commission regulations did not require counsel in this matter, the Commission finds it would be in the public interest to require counsel via order.³

¹ See also K.S.A. 77-516 and K.S.A. 77-517.

² See *State ex rel. Stephan v. Williams*, 246 Kan. 681, 691 (1990).

³ The administration of justice is efficiently furthered by requiring persons licensed to practice law and familiar with procedure to represent artificial entities. See *In re Arnold*, 274 Kan. 761, 770 (2002). See also K.S.A. 77-515(c) (“A state agency may require a corporation or other artificial person to participate by counsel.”).

THEREFORE, THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

A. The Presiding Officer for prehearing matters in this proceeding shall be Jonathan R. Myers, Assistant General Counsel, Kansas Corporation Commission, 266 N. Main Street, Suite 220, Wichita, Kansas, 67202-1513, telephone number (316) 337-6245, email address jon.myers@ks.gov. The Commission may designate others to serve in this capacity.

B. A prehearing conference is scheduled for **Thursday, August 15, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.** by telephone. The conference call information is: telephone number (253) 205-0468, Meeting ID 5248125436.⁴ **Operator must appear via a licensed attorney.**

C. At the prehearing conference, parties shall be prepared to discuss deadlines for filing testimony and briefs, discovery procedures, scheduling of a hearing with the Commission, and any other issues that will promote the orderly and prompt resolution of this proceeding. At the prehearing conference, without further notice, this proceeding may be converted into a conference hearing or a summary proceeding for disposition of this matter as provided by the Kansas Administrative Procedure Act (KAPA). Any party that fails to attend or participate in the prehearing conference, hearing, or other stage of this proceeding may be held in default under the KAPA.⁵

D. Although a presiding officer is designated, parties are still required to file pleadings with the Commission, and filings shall be made with the Commission's docket room. Any filing received after 5:00 p.m. shall be considered filed the next business day. In addition, any late filing shall be accompanied by a Motion to File Out-of-Time. **The Commission directs electronic service of all filings in the docket to include service on the Presiding Officer and mailed service of all filings to be directed to the Presiding Officer's attention.**

⁴ If prompted, there is no Participant ID; just press pound to continue.

⁵ K.S.A. 77-506; K.S.A. 77-516(c)(7)-(8).

E. The attorney designated to appear on behalf of the agency in this proceeding is Kelcey Marsh, Litigation Counsel, telephone number (316) 337-6200, kelcey.marsh@ks.gov.

BY THE COMMISSION IT IS SO ORDERED.

French, Chairperson; Keen, Commissioner; Kuether, Commissioner

Dated: 08/08/2024



Lynn M. Retz
Executive Director

Mailed Date: 08/08/2024

JRM

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

24-CONS-3390-CUNI

I, the undersigned, certify that a true copy of the attached Order has been served to the following by means of

first class mail and electronic service on 08/08/2024.

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/S/ KCC Docket Room
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