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Oil & Gas Exploration and Production Waste Issues

by: Michael M. Gibson

Federal and state environmental regulation of exploration and production wastes is tightening, and it is vital that the oil and gas industry find ways both to comply with such rules and to develop products and services that will create less environmental degradation. Recent developments in the two key applicable federal regulatory programs will be examined: the "drilling fluids" exemption in the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), and the "petroleum" exclusion in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA, commonly called "Superfund"). The overview will then move to State considerations, with

particular emphasis on new waste rules imposed by the Texas Railroad Commission and how such changes are likely to affect the oil and gas exploration and production industry. The presentation will conclude with a policy discussion of the economic costs and environmental benefits associated with these recent developments and how they are likely to be resolved in the context of historical environmental regulation.

Biographical Sketch

Michael M. Gibson is an environmental lawyer with over twenty years of experi-

ence and a partner in the Houston-based law firm of Bayko, Gibson, Carnegie, Hagan Schoonmaker & Meyer LLP. Born in Enid, Oklahoma on April 1, 1950, he received his preparatory and legal education at the Univ. of Oklahoma (B.A. 1972; J.D. 1975). He formerly served as an attorney with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Justice Department, and in private practice in Dallas and Houston. Mr. Gibson also serves as an adjunct professor at Texas A&M—Corpus Christi and at the National Spill Control School. He has lectured and written extensively on environmental law topics. ■