



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION  
Office of General Counsel  
20<sup>th</sup> Floor, L & C Tower  
401 Church Street  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

April 11, 2011

To: Christi A. Poston, Records Officer, TDEC  
From: David Henry, OGC, TDEC  
Re: Records Inventory Justification

Ms. Poston:

You requested an updated justification for OGC's recommendation of a 40-year storage period for the Oil and Gas files.

The oil and gas files are land records, documenting the transactions, tests, ownership, leases, bonding, and other events during the life-cycle of a typical oil and gas well. Many of these wells remain in production and under bond for several decades; others may be abandoned and unattended. Until production is terminated and they are properly plugged, these wells may remain a potential environmental hazard for decades.

The Oil and Gas Supervisor confirms that records should continue to be maintained for 40 years in order to assist the Department in physically locating these wells in the future; to assist in future lease and bonding issues; to assist in plugging, closure, and remedial issues, if necessary; and to be available in case of future development of any sort—including residential or commercial development. Unlike the ephemeral nature of some issues we deal with at TDEC, oil and gas issues can be very long-lasting involving the legal rights of landowners, developers, oil operators and drillers, lease holders, and others—not to mention the environmental concerns. However, the Supervisor has no objection to placing the Oil and Gas files on microfilm—but prefers that maps should remain available on paper and not be destroyed, and continue to remain stored and available as paper—even if they are also placed on microfilm.

David L. Henry  
Assistant General Counsel