

HOUSE BILL 658

By Casada

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 60, Chapter 1, relative to the plugging of oil and gas wells.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 60, Chapter 1, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new, appropriately designated section:

Section 60-1-1__.

(a) Notwithstanding any law, rule or regulation to the contrary, no oil or gas well shall be plugged until a determination has been made by the owner that the well is no longer viable for beneficial purposes, including but not limited to the development of geothermal energy sources. Such wells shall be maintained by a person in possession as owner, lessee, agent or manager as temporarily abandoned, provided that any change in the status of the well is immediately reported by the owner to the supervisor or the supervisor's representative for inspection.

(b) For the purposes of this section, "owner" means the person who has the right to drill into and to produce from any pool, and to appropriate the production for such person or others.

SECTION 2. The commissioner is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations to effectuate the purposes of this act. All such rules and regulations shall be promulgated in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 5.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2009, the public welfare requiring it.