



3. Vaquero Permian Gathering, LLC (“Vaquero” or “Respondent”) is a limited liability company doing business in the State of Texas. Respondent is a “person” as defined in Section 302(e) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7602(e).

4. Complainant and Respondent, having agreed that settlement of this action is in the public interest, consent to the entry of this Consent Agreement along with the corresponding Final Order hereinafter known together as the “CAFO” without adjudication of any issues of law or fact herein, and Respondent agrees to comply with the terms of this CAFO.

#### **B. JURISDICTION**

5. This CAFO is entered into under Section 113(d) of the Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d), and the Consolidated Rules, 40 C.F.R. Part 22. The alleged violations in this CAFO are pursuant to Section 113(a)(1)(B) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(a)(1)(B), (a)(3)(A).

6. EPA and the United States Department of Justice jointly determined that this matter, although it involves alleged violations that occurred more than a year before the initiation of this proceeding, is appropriate for an administrative penalty assessment. 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d); 40 C.F.R. § 19.4.

7. In satisfaction of the notice requirements of Section 113(a)(1) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(a)(1), on June 30, 2022, EPA issued to Respondent a Notice of Violation and Opportunity to Confer (the “NOVOC”) and provided a copy of the NOVOC to the State of Texas. In the NOVOC, EPA provided notice to both Respondent and the State of Texas that EPA found Respondent committed the alleged violations of the Texas State Implementation Plan (“SIP”) described in Section E of this CAFO and provided Respondent an opportunity to confer with EPA.

8. The Regional Judicial Officer is authorized to ratify this CAFO which memorializes a settlement between Complainant and Respondent. 40 C.F.R. §§ 22.4(b) and 22.18(b).

9. The issuance of this CAFO simultaneously commences and concludes this proceeding. 40 C.F.R. § 22.13(b).

### **C. GOVERNING LAW**

10. The Act is designed “to protect and enhance the quality of the Nation’s air resources so as to promote the public health and welfare and the productive capacity of its population.” 42 U.S.C. § 7401(b)(1).

11. EPA is authorized by Section 113 of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7413, to take action to ensure that air pollution sources comply with all federally applicable air pollution control requirements. These include requirements promulgated by EPA and those contained in SIPs and federally-enforceable permits.

12. Section 109(a) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7409(a), requires the Administrator of EPA to publish national ambient air quality standards (“NAAQS”) for certain air pollutants. Section 109(b) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7409(b), provides that the NAAQS establish primary air quality standards to protect public health and secondary standards to protect public welfare.

13. To achieve the objectives of the NAAQS and the CAA, Section 110(a) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7410(a), requires each State to adopt a SIP that provides for the implementation, maintenance, and enforcement of the NAAQS, and to submit it to the Administrator of EPA for approval.

14. The State of Texas has adopted a SIP that has been approved by EPA. *See* 40 C.F.R. Part 52, Subpart SS. The Texas SIP includes authorization for Texas to establish a

program for standard permits, which can be found at 30 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 116, Subchapter F – Standard Permits. *See* 40 C.F.R. § 52.2270(c).

15. Non-rule Standard Permits must comply with applicable requirements under Subchapter F of Chapter 116 of the Texas Administrative Code, which regulates standard permits for air pollution control projects that reduce or maintain authorized emission rates for existing facilities. *See* 30 Tex. Admin. Code § 116.601 – 116.615. Pursuant to 30 Tex. Admin. Code § 116.601(a)(2), the State of Texas issued the Air Quality Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Handling and Production Facilities (“TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities”), which includes the following requirements relevant to this CAFO:

a. “All facilities which have the potential to emit air contaminants must be maintained in good working order and operated properly during facility operations.”

TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(1).

b. All process equipment and storage facilities individually must meet the requirements of BACT listed in Table 10, and any combination of process equipment and storage facilities with an uncontrolled potential to emit equal to or greater than 25 tons per year of VOC are required to capture and route emissions to a control device with a minimum design control efficiency of at least 95%. TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(5) and (m) Table 10.

c. All seals and gaskets in VOC or H<sub>2</sub>S service must be “installed, checked, and properly maintained to prevent leaking” and tank hatches must “remain closed . . . except for sampling, gauging, loading, unloading, or planned maintenance activities.”

TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(6)(A) and (D).

d. “Flares must be lit at all times when gas streams are present” and pilot flame monitoring must meet the specifications in 40 C.F.R. § 60.18. TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(11)(A) and (E).

e. Sufficient gas must be added to flares if necessary to ensure adequate combustion. TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(11)(B).

**D. FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

16. Respondent owns and/or operates the oil and natural gas handling and production facilities listed in Appendix A, which are located in the Texas Permian Basin (the “Facilities”).

17. Respondent is the owner and/or operator of the Facilities within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 51.100(f).

18. At all times relevant to this proceeding, Respondent owned and/or operated units that emit Volatile Organic Compounds (“VOCs”) at the Facilities, which produce oil and gas.

19. The Facilities in Table 1 of Appendix A are subject to the State of Texas’s Standard Permits program under Subchapter F of Chapter 116 of the Texas Administrative Code, as specified in Table 1.

20. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (“TCEQ”) issued air permits to the Respondent, listed in Table 1 of Appendix A, under the SIP-approved Non-Rule Standard Permit program. The permits cover various emission units at the Facilities, including process equipment and/or vapor recovery systems, tanks, and flares.

21. Respondent is required to operate in compliance with certain provisions of the Texas SIP and Respondent is required by the Non-Rule Standard Permit to control the emission of waste gas streams from the Facilities.

22. EPA contracted helicopter flyovers of the Permian Basin between August 25, 2020, and October 15, 2020, to assess energy extraction facility emissions using Optical Gas Imaging (“OGI”) technology.

23. Flyovers of the Facilities at issue in this CAFO were conducted on August 27, 2020, and September 10, 2020. Appendix A identifies EPA’s observations at each Facility.

24. On December 14, 2020, EPA sent Respondent OGI video captures showing potentially unauthorized hydrocarbon emissions from process equipment and vapor recovery systems at the Venado Compressor Station. EPA asked Respondent to verify ownership, provide current site-specific permit information, and take any necessary corrective action to address unauthorized hydrocarbon emissions. EPA considered information provided by Respondent to determine whether violations occurred at the facility.

25. On January 4, 2021, Respondent timely responded and provided responsive information to EPA, including that corrective actions were completed at the Venado Compressor Station to address compliance issues observed during the flyovers.

26. On February 26, 2021, EPA sent Respondent correspondence, including OGI video captures, regarding potentially unauthorized hydrocarbon emissions from process equipment and vapor recovery systems at the Hondo Compressor Station, Desperado Compressor Station, and Goldfinger Compressor Station during the flyovers referenced in Paragraph 22. EPA asked Respondent to verify ownership, provide current site-specific permit information, and take any necessary corrective action to address unauthorized hydrocarbon emissions at each facility. EPA considered information provided by Respondent to determine whether violations occurred at the facilities.

27. On March 9, 2021, Respondent timely responded and provided responsive information to EPA that corrective actions were completed to address compliance issues observed during the flyovers at the Hondo Compressor Station, Desperado Compressor Station, and Goldfinger Compressor Station to address compliance issues observed during the flyovers.

28. More than thirty (30) days before the issuance of this CAFO, Respondent was notified of the violations alleged herein. On June 30, 2022, EPA sent Respondent the NOVOC and provided a copy to the State of Texas, in accordance with Section 113(a)(1) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(a)(1).

29. On July 11, 2022; September 27, 2022; December 16, 2022; February 22, 2023; and on various other occasions, EPA conferred with Respondent regarding the violations alleged herein and provided an opportunity for Respondent to submit additional information or materials.

30. Respondent submitted the following additional information to EPA:

a. On July 29, 2022, Respondent timely provided additional information regarding Respondent's operational and maintenance procedures and corrective actions taken at the Facilities. Respondent also timely provided evidence to EPA indicating Respondent's employee was conducting sampling and gauging of tanks at the Desperado Compressor Station at the time of EPA's flyover on September 10, 2020.

b. On September 6, 2022, Respondent submitted quarterly leak detection and repair reports for the Facilities.

c. On January 18, 2023, Respondent provided information regarding the procedures used by a third-party to conduct OGI surveys at the Facilities.

**E. ALLEGED VIOLATIONS**

31. EPA has conducted a comprehensive review of the facility-specific information gathered based upon observations made from the OGI video captures, facility permitted operations, and information provided by Respondent. Based on this review, EPA alleges the following violations for the Facilities:

- a. Respondent violated TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(1) by failing to ensure that facilities that have the potential to emit air contaminants are maintained in good working order and are operating properly during facility operations.
- b. Respondent violated TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(5) by failing to ensure that emissions from tanks are captured and routed to a control device with a minimum design control efficiency as specified in Table 10.
- c. Respondent violated TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(6) by not properly maintaining seals and gaskets to prevent leaking and not ensuring that tank hatches remain closed except during sampling, gauging, loading, unloading, or planned maintenance activities.
- d. Respondent violated TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(11)(A) and (E) by failing to ensure that the flares are lit at all times when waste gas streams are present and that flare tips are monitored per the specifications in 40 C.F.R. § 60.18.
- e. Respondent violated TCEQ Non-Rule Standard Permit for Oil and Gas Facilities (e)(11)(B) by not ensuring adequate combustion at the flares.



**F. CIVIL PENALTY AND CONDITIONS OF SETTLEMENT**

**a. General**

32. For the purpose of this proceeding, as required by 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2),

Respondent:

- a. admits that EPA has jurisdiction over the subject matter alleged in this CAFO;
- b. neither admits nor denies the specific factual allegations contained in the CAFO;
- c. consents to the assessment of a civil penalty, as stated below;
- d. consents to the issuance of any specified compliance or corrective action order<sup>1</sup>;
- e. consents to the conditions specified in this CAFO;
- f. consents to any stated Permit Action;
- g. waives any right to contest the alleged violations set forth in Section E of this CAFO; and
- h. waives its rights to appeal the Final Order included in this CAFO.

33. For the purpose of this proceeding, Respondent:

- a. agrees that this CAFO states a claim upon which relief may be granted against Respondent;
- b. acknowledges that this CAFO constitutes an enforcement action for purposes of considering Respondent's compliance history in any subsequent enforcement action;

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<sup>1</sup> Although 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(b)(2) requires each item in this list to be stated in this CAFO, subparagraphs (d) and (f) are not applicable to this particular case.

c. waives any and all remedies, claims for relief and otherwise available rights to judicial or administrative review that Respondent may have with respect to any issue of fact or law set forth in this CAFO, including any right of judicial review under Section 307(b)(1) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7607(b)(1);

d. consents to personal jurisdiction in any action to enforce this CAFO in the United States District Court for the Western District of Texas;

e. waives any right it may possess at law or in equity to challenge the authority of EPA to bring a civil action in a United States District Court to compel compliance with this CAFO and to seek an additional penalty for such noncompliance, and agrees that federal law shall govern in any such civil action; and

f. agrees that in any subsequent administrative or judicial proceeding initiated by the Complainant or the United States for injunctive relief, civil penalties, or other relief relating to these Facilities, Respondent shall not assert, and may not maintain, any defense or claim based upon the principles of waiver, res judicata, collateral estoppel, issue preclusion, claim preclusion, claim splitting, or other defenses based on any contention that the claims raised by the Complainant or the United States were or should have been brought in the instant case, except with respect to claims that have been specifically resolved pursuant to this CAFO.

#### **b. Penalty Assessment and Collection**

34. Upon consideration of the entire record herein, including the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, which are hereby adopted and made a part hereof, and upon consideration of the size of the business, the economic impact of the penalty on the business, Respondent's full compliance history and good faith efforts to comply, the duration of the violations, payment by

the violator of any penalties previously assessed for the same violation, the economic benefit of noncompliance, the seriousness of the violations, and other factors as justice may require, EPA has assessed a civil penalty in the amount of \$250,000 (the “EPA Penalty”). The EPA Penalty has been determined in accordance with Section 113 of the CAA, 42, U.S.C. § 7413, and at no time exceeded EPA’s statutory authority.

35. Respondent agrees to:

a. pay the EPA Penalty within 30 calendar days of the Effective Date of this CAFO; and

b. pay the EPA Penalty by cashier’s check, certified check, or wire transfer made payable to “Treasurer, United States of America, EPA – Region 6.” Payment shall be remitted in one of five (5) ways: (1) regular U.S. Postal Service mail including certified mail; (2) overnight mail; (3) wire transfer; (4) Automated Clearinghouse for receiving U.S. currency; or (5) Online Payment.

For regular U.S. Postal Service mail, U.S. Postal Service certified mail, or U.S. Postal Service express mail, payment should be remitted to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Fines and Penalties  
Cincinnati Finance Center  
PO Box 979077  
St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

For overnight mail (non-U.S. Postal Service, *e.g.* FedEx), payment should be remitted to:

U.S. Bank  
Government Lockbox 979078  
U.S. EPA Fines & Penalties  
1005 Convention Plaza  
SL-MO-C2-GL  
St. Louis, MO 63101

Contact: Natalie Pearson  
(314) 418-4087

For wire transfer, payment should be remitted to:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York  
ABA: 021030004  
Account Number: 68010727  
SWIFT address: FRNYUS33  
33 Liberty Street  
New York, NY 10045

Field Tag 4200 of the Fedwire message should read:  
“D 68010727 Environmental Protection Agency”

For Automated Clearinghouse (also known as “remittance express” or “REX”):

U.S. Treasury REX / Cashlink ACH Receiver  
ABA: 051036706  
Account Number: 310006, Environmental Protection Agency  
CTX Format Transaction Code 22 – checking  
Physical location of U.S. Treasury facility:  
5700 Rivertech Court  
Riverdale, MD 20737

Contact: Jesse White  
(301) 887-6548

For Online Payment:

<https://www.pay.gov/paygov/>  
Enter sfo 1.1 in search field  
Open form and complete required fields.

PLEASE NOTE: The docket number CAA-06-2023-3349 should be clearly typed on the check to ensure proper credit. The payment shall also be accompanied by a transmittal letter that shall reference Respondent’s name and address, the case name, and docket number CAA-06-2023-3349. Respondent’s adherence to this request will ensure proper credit is given when penalties are received for Region 6. Respondent shall also email a simultaneous notice of such payment, including a copy of the money order, or check, and the transmittal letter to the following email addresses:

Griffith Brown  
U.S. EPA Region 6  
Brown.Griffith@epa.gov

And

Region 6 Hearing Clerk  
U.S. EPA Region 6  
Vaughn.Lorena@epa.gov

36. Respondent agrees to pay the following on any overdue EPA Penalty:

a. Interest. Pursuant to Section 113(d)(5) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C.

§ 7413(d)(5), any unpaid portion of a civil penalty must bear interest at the rates established pursuant to 26 U.S.C. § 6621(a)(2).

b. Nonpayment Penalty. On any portion of a civil penalty more than ninety (90) calendar days delinquent, Respondent must pay a nonpayment penalty, pursuant to Section 113(d)(5) of the CAA, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d)(5), which shall accrue from the date the penalty payment became delinquent, and which shall be in addition to the interest which accrues under subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph.

37. Respondent shall pay a charge to cover the cost of processing and handling any delinquent penalty claim, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d)(5), including, but not limited to, attorney's fees incurred by the United States for collection proceedings.

38. If Respondent fails to timely pay any portion of the penalty assessed under this CAFO, EPA may:

a. refer the debt to a credit reporting agency, a collection agency, or to the Department of Justice for filing of a collection action in the appropriate United States District Court (in which the validity, amount, and appropriateness of the assessed penalty and of this CAFO shall not be subject to review) to secure payment of the debt, which

may include the original penalty, enforcement and collection expenses, nonpayment penalty and interest, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d)(5) and 40 C.F.R. §§ 13.13, 13.14, and 13.33;

b. collect the above-referenced debt by administrative offset (*i.e.*, the withholding of money payable by the United States to, or held by the United States for, a person to satisfy the debt the person owes the Government), which includes, but is not limited to, referral to the Internal Revenue Service for offset against income tax refunds, 40 C.F.R. Part 13, Subparts C and H; and

c. suspend or revoke Respondent's licenses or other privileges or suspend or disqualify Respondent from doing business with EPA or engaging in programs EPA sponsors or funds, 40 C.F.R. § 13.17.

**c. Conditions of Settlement**

39. Facility Review. Respondent shall perform the following facility review at each Facility:

a. Within thirty (30) days of the Effective Date of this CAFO, Respondent shall conduct a permitting and operations review in accordance with Section I of Appendix B.

b. Within sixty (60) days of the Effective Date of this CAFO, Respondent shall complete a site inspection in accordance with Section II of Appendix B.

c. Within sixty (60) days of Respondent completing the permitting and operations review, and site inspections described in subparagraphs a and b of Paragraph 39, Respondent shall complete an engineering assessment, in accordance with Section III of Appendix B.

40. Compliance Monitoring. Respondent shall perform the following compliance monitoring:

a. Respondent shall conduct optical gas imaging (“OGI”) surveys at each Facility, indicated in Appendix A, in accordance with Section I of Appendix C (hereinafter “OGI Survey”) on a monthly basis, with at least fourteen (14) days between consecutive OGI Surveys, for a period of one year from the Effective Date of this CAFO. The initial OGI Survey shall be conducted within sixty (60) days of the Effective Date of this CAFO.

b. Within sixty (60) days of the Effective Date of this CAFO, Respondent shall install and operate equipment monitoring in accordance with Sections II–III of Appendix C for a period of one (1) year from the Effective Date of this CAFO.

41. Letter Report. Within one (1) year of the Effective Date of this CAFO, and no earlier than eleven (11) months after the Effective Date of this CAFO, Respondent shall send a letter report to EPA (“Letter Report”) containing all information identified in Section I of Appendix D. The Letter Report shall be emailed to:

Griffith Brown  
Brown.Griffith@epa.gov

42. EPA reserves the right to pursue enforcement of any violations identified as a result of Paragraphs 39–42 (“Conditions of Settlement”).

**d. Additional Terms of Settlement**

43. Respondent agrees that the time period from the Effective Date of this CAFO until all the conditions specified in Paragraphs 39–42 of this CAFO are completed (the “Tolling Period”) shall not be included in computing the running of any statute of limitations potentially applicable to any action brought by Complainant on any claims set forth in Section E of this

CAFO (the “Tolled Claims”). Respondent shall not assert, plead, or raise in any fashion, whether by answer, motion or otherwise, any defense of laches, estoppel, or waiver, or other similar equitable defense based on the running of any statute of limitations or the passage of time during the Tolling Period in any action brought on the Tolled Claims.

44. The provisions of this CAFO shall apply to and be binding upon Respondent and its officers, directors, employees, agents, trustees, servants, authorized representatives, successors and assigns. From the Effective Date of this Agreement until the end of the Tolling Period, as set out in Paragraph 43 of this CAFO, Respondent must give written notice and a copy of this CAFO to any successors in interest prior to transfer of ownership or control of any portion or interest in the Facilities. Simultaneously with such notice, Respondent shall provide written notice of such transfer, assignment, or delegation to EPA. In the event of any such transfer, assignment or delegation, Respondent shall continue to be bound by the obligations or liabilities of this CAFO until EPA has provided written approval.

45. By signing this CAFO, Respondent acknowledges that this CAFO will be available to the public and agrees that this CAFO does not contain any confidential business information. *See* 40 C.F.R. Part 2, Subpart B (Confidentiality of Business Information).

46. By signing this CAFO, the undersigned representative of Complainant and the undersigned representative of Respondent each certify that he or she is fully authorized to execute and enter into the terms and conditions of this CAFO and has legal capacity to bind the party he or she represents to this CAFO.

47. By signing this CAFO, Respondent certifies that the information it has supplied concerning this matter was at the time of submission, and is, truthful, accurate, and complete for each submission, response, and statement. Respondent acknowledges that there are significant



penalties for submitting false or misleading information, including the possibility of fines and imprisonment for knowing submission of such information, under 18 U.S.C. § 1001.

48. EPA and Respondent agree to the use of electronic signatures for this matter. EPA and Respondent further agree to electronic service of this CAFO by email to the following addresses:

To EPA: Lee.Jamie@epa.gov

To Respondent: Kimberly.Landry@vaqueromidstream.com

49. Respondent specifically waives its right to seek reimbursement of its costs and attorney's fees under 5 U.S.C. § 504 and 40 C.F.R. Part 17. Except as qualified by Paragraph 37 of this CAFO, each party shall bear its own attorney's fees, costs, and disbursements incurred in this proceeding.

**G. EFFECT OF CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER**

50. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 22.18(c), completion of the terms of this CAFO resolves only Respondent's liability for federal civil penalties for the violations and facts specifically alleged above.

51. If Respondent fails to timely and satisfactorily complete every condition stated in Paragraphs 39–42 of this CAFO (including payment of any stipulated penalties owed), then Complainant may compel Respondent to perform the conditions in Paragraphs 39–42, seek civil penalties that accrue from the Effective Date of this CAFO until compliance is achieved, and seek other relief in a civil judicial action pursuant to the Clean Air Act, pursuant to contract law, or both.

52. Penalties paid pursuant to this CAFO shall not be deductible for purposes of federal taxes.

53. For purposes of the identification requirement in Section 162(f)(2)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. § 162(f)(2)(A)(ii), and 26 C.F.R. § 1.162-21(b)(2), performance of 37–40 is restitution, remediation, or required to come into compliance with the law.

54. This CAFO constitutes the entire agreement and understanding of the parties and supersedes any prior agreements or understandings, whether written or oral, among the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof.

55. The terms, conditions, and compliance requirements of this CAFO may not be modified or amended except upon the written agreement of both parties, and approval of the Regional Judicial Officer.

56. Any violation of the included Final Order may result in a civil judicial action for an injunction or civil penalties of up to \$117,468 per day of violation, or both, as provided in Section 113(b)(2) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(b)(2), as well as criminal sanctions as provided in Section 113(c) of the Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(c). EPA may use any information submitted under this CAFO in an administrative, civil judicial, or criminal action.

57. Nothing in this CAFO shall relieve Respondent of the duty to comply with all applicable provisions of the Act and other federal, state, or local laws or statutes, nor shall it restrict EPA's authority to seek compliance with any applicable laws or regulations, nor shall it be construed to be a ruling on, or a determination of, any issue related to any federal, state, or local permit.

58. Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the power of EPA to undertake any action against Respondent or any person in response to conditions that may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health, welfare, or the environment.

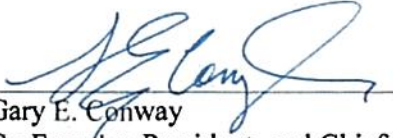
**H. EFFECTIVE DATE**

59. Respondent and Complainant agree to the issuance of the included Final Order. Upon filing, EPA will transmit a copy of the filed CAFO to Respondent. This CAFO shall become effective after execution of the Final Order by the Regional Judicial Officer on the date of filing with the Hearing Clerk.

The foregoing Consent Agreement In the Matter of Vaquero Permian Gathering, LLC, Docket No. CAA-06-2023-3349, is Hereby Stipulated, Agreed, and Approved for Entry.

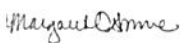
FOR RESPONDENT:

Date: 09/25/2023

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gary E. Conway  
Co-Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer  
Vaquero Midstream LLC

FOR COMPLAINANT:

Date: September 26, 2023

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Digitally signed by  
MARGARET OSBOURNE  
Date: 2023.09.26  
08:45:37 -05'00'

Cheryl T. Seager  
Director  
Enforcement and  
Compliance Assurance Division  
U.S. EPA, Region 6

**APPENDIX A: FACILITIES**  
**Vaquero Permian Gathering, LLC**  
**CAA-06-2023-3349**

**Table 1. Texas Facilities**

Site Identity	TCEQ Regulated Entity No.	Permit Number	Application Type	Flyover Date	Flyover Video ID	EPA Team Observations of Flyover Video Capture	Corresponding Sections of Appendix C, Sections II–III
Venado Compressor Station	RN110734969	156053	NRSP	8/27/2020	754	Tank hatch leak	Section II
Hondo Compressor Station	RN110738804	156129	NRSP	9/10/2020	983	Unlit flare and multiple tank hatch leaks	Sections II, III
Desperado Compressor Station	RN109564013	144531	NRSP	9/10/2020	985	Unlit flare	Section III
Goldfinger Compressor Station	RN109828293	147358	NRSP	9/10/2020	1008	Tank hatch leak	Section II

## **APPENDIX B: FACILITY REVIEW**

### **I. Permitting and Operations Review**

Respondent shall conduct a permitting and operations review, which shall consist, at a minimum, of the following:

1. For all the Facilities, if not already completed within the twelve (12) months prior to the Effective Date of this CAFO, review current permit representations (*i.e.*, applications), current equipment inventories, current reported production and emissions data (for all operating scenarios), and all maintenance and operating logs and repair/replacement work orders generated within the eighteen (18) months preceding the Effective Date (including those available from past owners), in order to evaluate and ascertain current or possible recurring non-compliance issues associated with equipment and process controls at the Facilities.

2. For all the Facilities, review operation and maintenance procedures for inspecting process equipment at each of the Facilities, and update the procedures, as necessary, to ensure that problems are timely identified and addressed to minimize emissions from process equipment. If Respondent does not have such procedures, Respondent shall create such procedures. Respondent shall ensure these procedures include, at a minimum, the following:

a. the use of a standard site inspection checklist during regular inspections that requires evaluation of the following: flares, separators, heater treaters, tank batteries, compressors, fuel skid, spill containment, solid waste and chemical storage, and miscellaneous Facility-wide operations;

b. a quality control program that ensures the quality, efficiency, and performance of Facility maintenance activities; and

c. appropriate and regular training for personnel implementing the operation and maintenance procedures.

### **II. Site Inspections**

Respondent shall conduct a site inspection that consists, at a minimum, of the following at each Facility:

1. For all tanks

a. Inspect and evaluate oil and water storage tanks and associated hatches, valves, gaskets, and pressure relief devices.

b. Evaluate whether the materials used are compatible with the gas compositions and whether they will deteriorate at unexpected rates.

c. Evaluate whether emergency pressure relief devices are set at the proper pressure set points.

2. For all flares
  - a. Evaluate whether flares are operating with a continuous pilot flame and that flame arrestors are properly installed.
  - b. Evaluate whether technology upgrades should be made to the flares.
  - c. Evaluate whether reconfiguration of flare tips and installation of thermocouples with Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition capability, auto ignitors with pilots, air assist packages, and pressure gauges for flame arrestors would be appropriate.
3. Evaluate the operation of tanks, separators, compressors, vapor recovery units/towers, and other operational equipment.
  - a. Inspect and address liquid leaks and staining at the flares, storage tanks, and separators.
  - b. Evaluate whether equipment inventories and process operational descriptions for each site are current.
  - c. Evaluate whether there are unauthorized emissions during normal operations by conducting an OGI survey in accordance with Section I of Appendix C.

### **III. Engineering Assessment**

Respondent shall conduct an engineering assessment that consists, at a minimum, of the following at each Facility:

1. Performed by a Professional Engineering firm with experience conducting an engineering and design assessment of oil and gas handling and production facilities.
2. Use condensate and gas samples, equipment inventories, and volume throughput rates to perform process flow modeling (e.g., ProMax modeling) and evaluate whether site equipment and design sufficiently address vapor emissions and meet regulatory requirements.
3. Evaluate whether all emissions sources, including process equipment fire tubes, gas aspirated generators, pneumatic pumps, and pneumatically actuated control valves, have been identified and accounted for in determining total emissions.
4. Based on the preliminary compliance review and site inspections, re-evaluate whether the Facilities are properly permitted and determine whether Respondent should prepare permit applications or revisions.
5. Evaluate whether flares are operated and maintained in conformance with their designs, including recommendations and specifications provided by the flare manufacturers, and in a manner consistent with good air pollution control practices for minimizing emissions.

6. Use engineering assessment results to revise the equipment specifications and process configuration to ensure vapor control systems, where required, adequately handle maximum instantaneous vapor emissions, including working, breathing, or flashing losses from the tank batteries.

7. Based on preliminary compliance review, site inspections, and engineering assessments, evaluate the sufficiency of each Facility's spill containment adequacy and retention capacity.



## APPENDIX C: COMPLIANCE MONITORING

### I. OGI Survey

Respondent shall conduct an OGI camera survey (“OGI Survey”) at each Facility, that includes, at a minimum, the following procedures:

1. The OGI Survey shall be conducted using an OGI camera designed for and capable of detecting hydrocarbon and VOC emissions, performed by trained personnel or third parties, who maintain proficiency through regular use of the OGI camera. The OGI Survey shall be conducted during normal operations to detect any visible emissions, including while and immediately after hydrocarbon liquids are being sent to the tanks from all associated well production operations.

2. The OGI Survey shall consist of an inspection of all equipment and components at the Facility, including: tanks and associated hatches, valves, gaskets, and pressure relief devices; control devices; compressors; separators; vapor recovery units/tower, and vapor control piping.

#### Conducting the OGI Survey

3. At least once each monitoring day, each operator must record a verification video to demonstrate the OGI camera is capable of detecting hydrocarbon and VOC emissions.

4. For all OGI Surveys, maintain a survey log electronically in an Excel spreadsheet that includes, at a minimum, the following:

- a. Site name and GPS coordinates;
- b. OGI camera operator name;
- c. Weather conditions at the start and end of each survey, including ambient temperature, wind speed, relative humidity, and sky conditions;
- d. Identification of the OGI camera used to conduct the survey, including make and model;
- e. Date and approximate start and end times; and
- f. Description of any visible emissions observed.

5. If a leak or defect is found, at a minimum capture a 10-second video clip of the leaking or defective component and keep the video clip with the rest of the OGI Survey documentation. The leaking or defective component must be tagged for repair, and the date, time, and location of the leak or defect must be recorded in the survey log referenced in Paragraph 4 of this Section.

6. A leak or defect shall be repaired as soon as practicable, but no later than fifteen (15) days after initial observation. Any absence of pilot flame at a control device, or other

indication of improper operation, shall be corrected and the control device returned to proper operation as soon as practicable. If the next scheduled monthly OGI Survey is more than 15 days from the date of the corrective action, the corrective actions must be verified as soon as practicable, but no later than 15 days by visual observation (in the context of an unlit flare) or using EPA Method 21 (in the context of other emissions). The corrective action shall further be validated at the next monthly OGI Survey. The date and description of the corrective action, as well as the date of corrective action verification, must be recorded in the survey log referenced in Paragraph 4 of this Section.

Quality Assurance and Quality Control

7. The Facility must have a written process which ensures the validity of the monitoring data. Examples may include routine review and sign-off of the monitoring data by the camera operator's supervisor, periodic comparative monitoring using a different camera operator as part of a continuing training verification plan, or other due-diligence procedures.

Reporting

8. The Facility must submit the following records to EPA on a monthly basis pursuant to the requirements of Paragraph 9 of this Section, but no later than thirty (30) days after conducting each OGI Survey:

- a. Survey logs for all OGI Surveys;
- b. All video footage for each OGI Survey;
- c. Verification video for each monitoring day; and
- d. Record of corrective actions.

9. Upload all required records in Paragraph 8 of this Section to an electronic folder provided by EPA. Respondent shall contact the enforcement officer identified in Paragraph 41 of the Conditions of Settlement to make arrangements to upload the required records.

**II. Tank Pressure Monitoring**

Respondent shall conduct tank pressure monitoring at the Facilities identified in Appendix A in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Use manufacturer's recommendation to install, calibrate, maintain, and operate an electronic pressure monitor(s) at each tank system (collectively, "Tank Pressure Monitors").
2. Tank Pressure Monitors shall record data at least once every sixty (60) seconds with a data transmission at least every hour to a central monitoring station.
3. Tank Pressure Monitors must be operated and function continuously except during instances of planned or unplanned maintenance or malfunction of the Tank Pressure Monitors. If Respondent identifies that a Tank Pressure Monitor is malfunctioning, Respondent

shall complete the repair within ten (10) days. Respondent shall record all dates, locations, durations, and causes of Tank Pressure Monitor malfunctions. In the case of a telecommunications failure beyond Respondent's control regarding the data transmission requirement in this Paragraph and Paragraph 2 of this Section, the data recorded during such failure shall be transmitted by Respondent to a central monitoring station within a reasonable time, but no later than twenty-four (24) hours, after the recommencement of telecommunication services. Respondent shall record the date, duration, and cause of each telecommunications failure beyond Respondent's control that results in delay of transmittal of data to a central monitoring station.

4. For the first thirty (30) days after the Tank Pressure Monitors are installed pursuant to Paragraph 1 of this Section, Respondent shall calibrate and optimize the Tank Pressure Monitors to ensure that the Tank Pressure Monitors reliably produce accurate data per the manufacturer's specifications.

5. Within thirty (30) days after the Tank Pressure Monitors are installed pursuant to Paragraph 1, Respondent shall:

a. conduct an OGI Survey during a pressure test to determine the leak point of each tank system. During the pressure test, Respondent shall pressurize the tank system up to the highest point at which the pressure relief devices are not emitting ("leak point"). The leak point shall be no greater than the lowest set point of any pressure relief device; and

b. determine the trigger point, which must be at least two ounces per square inch below the lowest set point of any pressure relief device in the tank system and less than the leak point (e.g., if a tank is equipped with a thief hatch with a set point of 16 oz/in<sup>2</sup> and a pressure relief valve ("PRV") with a set point of 16 oz/in<sup>2</sup>, the trigger point can be no greater than 14 oz/in<sup>2</sup>).

6. At any time after sixty (60) days after the Tank Pressure Monitors are installed at a tank system pursuant to Paragraph 1 of this Section, if: (a) any Tank Pressure Monitor records two (2) or more measurements in a 48-hour period that exceed the trigger point, or (b) a measurement exceeds the trigger point continuously for a duration of one (1) minute or longer, such record shall require a site investigation using an OGI camera or EPA Method 21. Respondent shall record all dates, locations, durations, and causes of each instance when the Tank Pressure Monitor records a measurement that exceeds the trigger point. Each site investigation shall be documented with a record that includes the results of the site investigation, any observation of VOC emissions observed, and any corrective actions taken to address observations of VOC emissions or any instances of malfunction of the Tank Pressure Monitors.

7. The Facility must submit all records made pursuant to Paragraphs 3 and 6 of this section to EPA on a monthly basis within twenty-one (21) days of the end of each month. The Facility must upload the records to an electronic folder provided by EPA. Respondent shall contact the enforcement officer identified in Paragraph 41 of the Conditions of Settlement to make arrangements to upload the required records.

### **III. Combustion Control Device Monitoring**

By the applicable deadline in subparagraph b of Paragraph 40 of Section F (Conditions of Settlement), Respondent shall conduct combustion control device monitoring at the Facilities identified in Appendix A, in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Use manufacturer's recommendations to install, calibrate, maintain, and operate, for each combustion control device at each Facility, a thermocouple or equivalent device to detect the presence of a flame for each combustion control device (collectively, "Pilot Monitors").
2. Pilot Monitors shall record data at least once every five (5) minutes and, whenever the monitor fails to detect the presence of a flame, the monitors shall transmit data reporting such event to a central monitoring station within one (1) hour.
3. Pilot Monitors must be operated and function continuously except during instances of planned or unplanned maintenance or malfunction of the Pilot Monitors. If a Pilot Monitor malfunctions, Respondent shall complete the repair or maintenance of the Pilot Monitor within five (5) days. Respondent shall record all dates, locations, durations, and causes of Pilot Monitor malfunctions.
4. Respondent shall record all dates, locations, durations and causes of each instance when the Pilot Monitor failed to detect the presence of a flame.
5. The Facility must submit all records made pursuant to Paragraphs 3 and 4 of this section to EPA on a monthly basis within twenty-one (21) days of the end of each month. The Facility must upload the records to an electronic folder provided by EPA. Respondent shall contact the enforcement officer identified in Paragraph 41 of the Conditions of Settlement to make arrangements to upload the required records.

## APPENDIX D

### I. Letter Report Requirements

Respondent shall provide a Letter Report to EPA containing the following:

1. Explain the scope of the Facility Review, provide a summary of the Facility Review process, and explain any obstacles encountered.
2. State the period of time covered by the Facility Review and list the date(s) any on-site portion of the Facility Review was conducted.
3. Identify the Facility Review team members, including names, titles, and summaries of qualifications.
4. Identify any representatives of EPA or Respondent who observed any portion of the Facility Review.
5. Include a written explanation of the instances of non-compliance noted during the Facility Review, and the areas of concern identified during the course of the Facility Review, regardless of whether they require corrective action or merit further review or evaluation for potential environmental or regulatory impacts.
6. A statement of whether Respondent is applying for, or will apply for, new or modified permits, repairing or replacing any equipment in accordance with the Facility Review, and implementing any of the examples of best management practices identified in Section II of Appendix D.
7. A description of the following steps that Respondent has taken or will take:
  - a. A schedule for promptly addressing deficiencies identified in the Facility Review and Compliance Monitoring.
  - b. A list of new equipment and piping to be procured, including flares, combustors, vapor recovery units/towers, tank hatches, pressure relief valves, piping, and gaskets.
  - c. The repair, replacement, upgrading, and/or installation of equipment, including vapor recovery units/towers, flares, combustors, tank pressure relief valves, tank hatches and gaskets, and compressors.
  - d. The replacement of any piping, valves, flame arrestors, or other equipment that is inadequately sized for the flow of condensate and volume of emissions.
  - e. The addition, upgrading, or replacement of spill containment capability.
8. An estimation of the total emission reductions for specific actions taken or improvements made or planned to be made.

9. Confirmation that there are no unauthorized emissions during normal operations for newly installed equipment (e.g., conduct OGI Camera Surveys to detect and correct any visible emissions).

## II. Examples of Best Management Practices

1. Integrate newly acquired facilities into Respondent's environmental compliance management system that includes some or all of the following:

a. Ensure all NSPS and National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants ("NESHAP") regulated units are identified in, and integrated into, the new owner's compliance management system.

b. Ensure all facilities are integrated into the new owner's programs for managing solid waste and naturally-occurring radioactive material ("NORM").

c. Ensure all spill and emergency response plans conform to regulatory requirements for such programs.

d. Confirm that operator responsibilities and priorities, facility inspection and repair protocols, and other best practices manuals and checklists are being utilized at the newly-acquired facilities.

2. Implement an emission surveillance program that includes some or all of the following:

a. Develop a standard program for inspecting sites and equipment with optical gas imaging cameras to confirm that each site has adequate vapor control systems.

b. Perform regular OGI surveys in accordance with Section I of Appendix C to detect visible emissions; ensure surveys and survey frequency comply with federal and state requirements.

c. Regularly inspect flares to ensure proper ignition and burning of emissions; ensure flare inspections and inspection frequency comply with federal and state requirements.

d. Ensure proper functioning of flares and the presence of a pilot flame.

3. Implement an operation and maintenance program that includes some or all of the following to maintain compliance:

a. Establish document generation and retention protocols, personnel roles and responsibilities, safety protocols, and work order systems to ensure problems are timely identified and addressed.

b. Consider system re-designs as changes in operating conditions occur.



FILED

Vaquero Permian Gathering, LLC  
Docket No. CAA-06-2023-3349

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REGIONAL HEARING CLERK  
EPA REGION VI

UNITED STATES  
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 6  
DALLAS, TEXAS

IN THE MATTER OF:

Vaquero Permian Gathering, LLC  
Dallas, Texas

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DOCKET NO. CAA-06-2023-3349

RESPONDENT

**FINAL ORDER**

Pursuant to section 113(d) of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(d), and the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, the attached Consent Agreement resolving this matter is incorporated by reference into this Final Order and is hereby ratified.

Vaquero Permian Gathering, LLC is ORDERED to comply with all terms of the Consent Agreement. In accordance with 40 C.F.R. §22.31(b), this Final Order shall become effective upon filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

THOMAS  
RUCKI

Digitally signed by THOMAS RUCKI  
DN: cn=U.S. Government,  
ou=Environmental Protection Agency,  
o=THOMAS RUCKI,  
c=U.S.A., email=trucki@epa.gov,  
Date: 2023.09.26 15:28:48 -0400

Thomas Rucki  
Regional Judicial Officer  
U.S. EPA, Region 6

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the Consent Agreement and Final Order was electronically delivered to the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. EPA - Region 6, 1201 Elm Street, Suite 500, Dallas, Texas 75270-2102, and that a true and correct copy was sent this day in the following manner to the addressees:

EMAIL - READ RECEIPT REQUESTED

Kimberly Landry, Kimberly.Landry@vaqueromidstream.com

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U.S. EPA, Region 6  
Dallas, Texas