Arkansas Energy Personnel Moves: Lawrence E. Bengal, Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment Chief Administrator of Energy, Announces Retirement

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The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment ("E&E") issued a January 7th news release stating that Lawrence E. Bengal, Chief Administrator of Energy for E&E, has announced plans to retire.

Mr. Bengal served the previous 20 years as Director of the Oil and Gas Commission ("OGC") which was consolidated in E&E during the Arkansas state government reorganization with the passage of Act 910 I 2019.

OGC has described its mission as to:

…prevent waste and encourage conservation of the Arkansas oil, natural gas, and brine resources to protect the correlatively rights associated with those resources, and to respect the environment during the production, extraction, and transportation of those resources.

E&E Secretary Shane Khoury is quoted in the new release as stating:

…It has been an absolute honor and privilege to work with Larry for the past 20 years as he has been a great director, mentor, and friend…Larry is a consummate professional, and his expertise and service to our state in the oil, natural gas, brine, and mineral resources sectors have been invaluable.

By way of highlights, the news release notes that Mr. Bengal:

- Selected to be OGC Director by former Governor Mike Huckabee in 2005.
- Served as a Commissioner on the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission from 2005-2023.
- Assisted in developing the framework for modern oil and gas regulation for the State of Arkansas.
- Successfully managed the development of the Fayetteville Shale.
- One of the first oil and gas regulators to develop rules for hydraulic fracturing.
- Continued work in establishing the initial regulatory framework for the early development of lithium resources.
- Seeking primacy for Class VI injection wells.
- State representative to a United States Environmental Protection Agency Internal Work Group dealing with disposal well induced seismicity.

- Service as the Arkansas representative to the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission, Groundwater Protection Council, and Interstate Mining Compact Commission.
- Awarded by the International Oil and Gas Compact Commission the E.W. Marland Award recognizing outstanding state regulators for their dedication to public service and contribution to oil and gas regulations.

Mr. Bengal's retirement will be effective April 30, 2025.

A copy of the announcement can be found here.