



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 17, 2025

Long-time OGC Director Announces Retirement

NORTH LITTLE ROCK – Lawrence E. Bengal, director of the Arkansas Oil and Gas Commission (OGC) for the past 20 years and the first Chief Administrator of Energy for the Department of Energy and Environment (E&E), has announced his plans to retire following a 52-year professional career.

“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,” said Shane Khoury, Secretary of E&E. “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.”

Bengal was selected to be the OGC director by former Governor Mike Huckabee in 2005. He also served as a commissioner on the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission from 2005 – 2023.

After the passage of Act 910 in 2019, which established the Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment, Bengal was named the first Chief Administrator of Energy and also continued in his role as director of OGC.

“While I am happy for him to have the opportunity to enjoy a well-earned retirement, I know that he will continue to be a stalwart for the OGC and E&E, and that we will miss him tremendously,” stated Khoury.

During Bengal’s tenure in Arkansas, he helped lay the regulatory framework for modern oil and gas regulation for the state. He successfully managed the development of the Fayetteville Shale and became one of the first state oil and gas regulators in the nation to develop rules for hydraulic fracturing and induced seismic activity that ensured the safety of the natural state while promoting resource development.

Most recently, Bengal has continued his work in establishing the initial regulatory framework for the early development of lithium resources and the next steps of securing primacy for Class VI injection wells.

Bengal has testified before United States Senate and House Committees regarding regulatory frameworks for geologic storage of CO₂ and other oil and gas matters. He served as a state representative to a U.S. EPA Internal Work Group dealing with disposal well induced seismicity and the initial development of the UIC Class VI regulations for the geologic storage of CO₂.

While the director of OGC, he served as the Arkansas representative to the Interstate Oil and Gas Compact Commission (IOGCC), Ground Water Protection Council (GWPC), and Interstate Mining Compact Commission (IMCC), where has held several leadership roles for each organization. In 2009, IOGCC honored Bengal with the



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E.W. Marland Award that recognizes outstanding state regulators for their dedication to public service and contributions to oil and gas regulations.

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

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