

The seal of the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts is visible in the background, featuring a five-pointed star in the center, surrounded by a wreath of olive and oak branches. The words "THE COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS" and "STATE OF TEXAS" are inscribed around the perimeter of the seal.

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Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

# 2021 School District Property Value Study

Discount Rate Range  
for Oil and Gas Properties

November 2021



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## Discount Rate Range for Oil and Gas Properties

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts conducts a School District Property Value Study (PVS) that includes oil and gas property appraisals. The Comptroller's Property Tax Assistance Division (PTAD) conducts these appraisals according to methods and procedures outlined in the Comptroller's *Manual for Discounting Oil and Gas Income*, as required by Property Tax Code Section 23.175.

As part of the PVS, PTAD calculates a range of discount rates used to discount the projected future income of oil and gas produced from individual properties. For the 2021 PVS, PTAD will use a range of 10.41 to 16.91 percent unless property-specific risk requires use of a discount rate outside this range.

This report summarizes this year's methodology for the discount rate range determination. For more detailed information, contact the **PTAD at 800-252-9121 or by email at [ptad.oilandgas@cpa.texas.gov](mailto:ptad.oilandgas@cpa.texas.gov)**.

### Oil and Gas Property Appraisal

One of the primary economic parameters in oil and gas property appraisals is the discount rate used to convert future income streams to a present-day value. The process of discounting converts the value of cash projected to be received in the future to the current price investors would pay for the right to receive the income. This appraisal method is the discounted cash flow analysis and it is a widely accepted appraisal method for oil and gas properties.

Each year, PTAD calculates a discount rate based upon the **overall mean weighted average cost of capital (WACC)** of a sample of petroleum companies. To account for inherent risk associated with oil and gas production from a single property rather than a company-wide portfolio of producing properties, PTAD adds two percentage points to the **overall mean WACC** to establish the **base discount rate** for each oil and gas property in the annual PVS. Other property-specific risk considerations may warrant additional risk adjustments

(increase or decrease) that are used to calculate an **adjusted discount rate** for each property. The **adjusted discount rate** will usually fall within the discount rate range determined each year.

Discount rates are tied closely to local, national, and global economic performance. For example, recent events surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the energy market, causing inflation. The oil and gas industry made changes to debt to equity ratios to help buffer the results of an increasingly volatile market. A risk reduction results in a lower weighted average cost of capital. To incorporate the risk of COVID-19 and inflation in valuations, it is preferable to adjust cash flow projections as opposed to adding ad-hoc risk premiums to discount rates.<sup>12</sup> During high inflation, investors and lenders ask for additional compensation for the loss in purchasing power. The Fisher equation is the economic concept that there is a relationship between normal and real interest rates under the effect of inflation. The equation states that the normal interest rate is equal to the sum of the real interest rate plus the inflation rate. The normal interest rate can be approximated by the formula Risk Free = Real Rate (U.S. 30-Year Treasury Bond Rates, 4th-quarter average) + Expected Inflation.<sup>13</sup> PTAD used an expected inflation rate of 6 percent.

In accordance with International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) guidelines, PTAD adds the county and school district ad valorem total tax rates to the **adjusted discount rate** to determine a **property-specific discount rate** (city and special district tax rates are not included). We then apply the **property-specific discount rate** to the PTAD appraisal to discount the projected future income of oil and gas produced from the property.

### Discount Rate

The three generally accepted methods for estimating a discount rate are: analysis of oil and gas property sales, market surveys and the weighted average cost of capital.

## Market Survey Methods

The Society of Petroleum Evaluation Engineers (SPEE) conducts an annual opinion poll market survey. Responses from petroleum company executives, industry consultants and energy banks concerning property acquisitions and divestitures offer insight into the discount rates used to analyze properties in the market.

## The Weighted Average Cost of Capital (WACC) Method

Each year PTAD calculates the WACC for several petroleum companies operating in Texas that are listed on the New

York Stock Exchange or the Over-The-Counter stock market. PTAD calculates a discount rate based upon the average of the companies' WACC.

For the 2021 PVS, PTAD compiled year-end 2020 financial data for 19 petroleum companies to calculate the WACC for each company. **Table 1** presents the results of the WACC calculations. The overall mean WACC for the 19 companies is 12.45 percent with a standard deviation of 1.86 percent. The Comptroller's *Manual for Discounting Oil and Gas Income* includes information on the methodology used to calculate a WACC.

TABLE 1  
Petroleum Companies' Financial Information Used for WACC Method

Company Name	Total Capital	Total Equity	Total Convertible Preferred Stock	Total Long-Term Debt	Equity % of Capital	Convertible Preferred Stock % of Capital	Long-Term Debt % of Capital	Beta Factor	After Income Tax Cost of Equity %	Before Income Tax Cost of Equity %	Cost Of Convertible Preferred Stock %	Cost Of Debt %	Before Income Tax WACC %
Apache	\$14,126,478,520	\$5,356,478,520	\$0	\$8,770,000,000	37.92	0.00	62.08	1.90	16.95	21.45	0.00	4.28	10.79
Cabot	\$7,439,551,939	\$6,493,627,939	\$0	\$945,924,000	87.29	0.00	12.71	0.85	11.79	14.93	0.00	5.72	13.76
Chevron	\$206,639,984,471	\$162,581,984,471	\$0	\$44,058,000,000	78.68	0.00	21.32	1.30	14.00	17.73	0.00	1.16	14.19
Cimarex	\$5,845,832,893	\$3,858,533,893	\$0	\$1,987,299,000	66.00	0.00	34.00	1.40	14.49	18.35	0.00	2.03	12.80
Conoco Phillips	\$57,461,006,698	\$42,711,006,698	\$0	\$14,750,000,000	74.33	0.00	25.67	1.35	14.25	18.04	0.00	2.09	13.94
Devon	\$10,337,420,000	\$6,039,420,000	\$0	\$4,298,000,000	58.42	0.00	41.58	1.60	15.48	19.59	0.00	3.73	13.00
Diamondback	\$13,275,468,009	\$7,651,468,009	\$0	\$5,624,000,000	57.64	0.00	42.36	1.50	14.99	18.97	0.00	2.86	12.14
EOG	\$34,138,016,074	\$29,102,665,074	\$0	\$5,035,351,000	85.25	0.00	14.75	1.20	13.51	17.10	0.00	1.51	14.80
Exxon Mobil	\$221,666,260,000	\$174,484,260,000	\$0	\$47,182,000,000	78.71	0.00	21.29	1.15	13.27	16.79	0.00	1.55	13.55
Hess	\$24,491,479,057	\$16,205,479,057	\$0	\$8,286,000,000	66.17	0.00	33.83	1.45	14.74	18.66	0.00	3.60	13.56
Marathon	\$10,666,630,000	\$5,262,630,000	\$0	\$5,404,000,000	49.34	0.00	50.66	1.55	15.23	19.28	0.00	5.58	12.34
Murphy	\$5,348,784,599	\$2,360,717,599	\$0	\$2,988,067,000	44.14	0.00	55.86	1.75	16.21	20.52	0.00	5.29	12.01
Laredo	\$1,420,751,095	\$241,485,095	\$0	\$1,179,266,000	17.00	0.00	83.00	0.85	11.79	14.93	0.00	8.90	9.93
Ovintiv	\$10,097,728,000	\$3,730,728,000	\$0	\$6,367,000,000	36.95	0.00	63.05	1.65	15.72	19.90	0.00	4.27	10.05
Pioneer	\$21,892,332,453	\$18,732,332,453	\$0	\$3,160,000,000	85.57	0.00	14.43	1.30	14.00	17.73	0.00	2.46	15.52
Range	\$4,736,139,216	\$1,650,532,216	\$0	\$3,085,607,000	34.85	0.00	65.15	0.95	12.28	15.55	0.00	6.24	9.49
Occidental	\$52,713,895,448	\$16,124,495,448	\$844,400,000	\$35,745,000,000	30.59	1.60	67.81	1.60	15.48	19.59	8.04	3.98	8.82
SM Energy	\$3,078,754,900	\$702,222,900	\$0	\$2,376,532,000	22.81	0.00	77.19	1.80	16.46	20.83	0.00	10.48	12.84
Earthstone Energy	\$286,440,329	\$171,440,329	\$0	\$115,000,000	59.85	0.00	40.15	1.50	14.99	18.97	0.00	3.99	12.95
TOTAL	\$705,662,953,699	\$503,461,507,699	\$844,400,000	\$201,357,046,000	1,071.49	1.60	826.91	26.65	275.63	348.90	8.04	79.74	236.50
ENTRIES					19	1	19	19	19	19	1	19	19
AVERAGE					56.39	1.60	43.52	1.40	14.51	18.36	8.04	4.20	12.45
STANDARD DEVIATION					22.22	0.37	22.12	0.30	1.49	1.88	1.84	2.47	1.86
											Hurdle Rate		2.00
											Base Discount Rate		14.45

## Base Discount Rate for All Oil and Gas Properties in the Property Value Study

PTAD adds two percentage points to the overall mean WACC of 12.45 percent to establish the base discount rate of 14.45 percent for the 2021 PVS. The two percentage points account for inherent risk associated with oil and gas production from an individual property. Other considerations may warrant additional property-specific risk or risk reduction in determining the adjusted discount rate for an individual property.

### Adjusted Discount Rate

The base discount rate may be adjusted to reflect a wide variety of property-specific risks. PTAD considers specific risks associated with a property to determine its adjusted discount rate. Below are some common examples of risk that PTAD routinely considers and the associated adjustments.

#### Limited History

Limited production history is frequently cited as the major risk associated with appraising oil and gas properties. Decline curve analysis requires sufficient production history and some knowledge of the reservoir drive mechanism to enhance the confidence level for reserve forecasts.

Type of Risk	Added Percentage Points
Limited History:	
Less than one year	3
One to two years	2
Two to three years	1
More than three years	0

#### Single Completion Leases

Single completion leases have a greater chance of early abandonment because they do not involve or exhibit the potential for production from additional zones in a single well bore. Multiple completion wells are not adjusted for this risk.

Type of Risk	Added Percentage Points
Single Completion Lease	1

#### Offshore Leases

Offshore properties often involve production and economic risks greater than those associated with onshore properties.

Type of Risk	Added Percentage Points
Offshore Lease	2

#### Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) Leases

This recovery method, by definition, involves complex production methods and additional economic risks. Early-stage projects have a high degree of uncertainty for success, and pilot projects experience unusual risks associated with expansion throughout the field.

Type of Risk	Added Percentage Points
EOR Projects	Varies from 1 to 3 based on an individual project's ranking in the <i>Oil and Gas Journal</i> biennial EOR Survey

#### Other Adjustments

Other risk adjustments may be applied to individual properties at the appraiser's discretion.

Type of Risk	Adjustment Trend
Short Remaining Life (< 2 years)	may increase risk
High or Increasing Water Cut	may increase risk
Gas Curtailment	may increase risk
Environmental Concerns	may increase risk
Erratic Production	may increase risk
Long History, Stable Production	may decrease risk

## Reconciling Results into the Discount Rate Range

This year's discount rate range of 10.41 to 16.91 percent is defined at the lower end by PTAD's base discount rate. PTAD establishes the upper end of the discount rate range by reconciling survey and study data as shown in **Table 2**. The upper end of the discount rate range is the average of the "high-end" values listed in the Upper Discount Rate Range column. Similarities are evident when comparing the statistical results of the data; however, differences in the data highlight contrasting views in the market.

TABLE 2  
**Summary of Findings from Annual  
Market Survey and the Property Value Study**

Study Author	Discount Rate	Standard Deviation	Discount Rate Range		Data Points
			Lower	Upper	
Society of Petroleum Evaluation Engineers*	10.00	N/A	10.00	to 13.00	35
Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts / Property Tax Assistance Division**	14.16	0.99	10.81	to 20.81	4,473
Average	12.08	0.99	10.41	16.91	

\* Discount Rate based on 35 survey responses: *Survey of Parameters Used in Property Evaluation*, June 2020

\*\* Discount Rate based on the appraisal of 4,473 properties (average, excluding ad valorem taxes): 2020 Property Value Study

## Conclusions

A range of discount rates adjusted for individual property risk is appropriate for the appraisal of the wide variety of oil and gas properties in Texas. Use of a particular adjusted discount rate should be tailored to the appraiser’s perception of risk associated with a specific property. Based upon the reconciliation of data from the sales analysis, market survey, WACC and study results, PTAD concludes that a discount rate range of 10.41 to 16.91 percent is generally suitable for the appraisal of oil and gas properties in the 2021 PVS unless property-specific risk requires use of a discount rate outside this range. PTAD adds the appropriate ad valorem tax rates to the adjusted discount rate to determine the property-specific discount rate that is applied in PTAD’s appraisal to discount the projected future income of oil and gas produced from the property.

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