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From-NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

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August 17, 2004

Mr. Brian Johnson
Branch Chief
Securities and Exchange Commission
Branch of Filer Support 2
Room 1004 -- STOP/1-4
450 Fifth Street, NW
Judiciary Plaza
Washington, DC 20549

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The New York Stock Exchange certifies approval for listing and registration under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, The Houston Exploration Company, Rights to Purchase Series A Junior Participating Preferred Stock and requests immediate acceleration of registration. Adequate distribution assured. Form 8-A received on August 17, 2004.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten signature]

PROCESSED
AUG 18 2004
THOMSON
FINANCIAL