

# Energy and Environment Committee

October 7, 2025



## CF 24-0585

# Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells Remediation and Closure Federal Funding

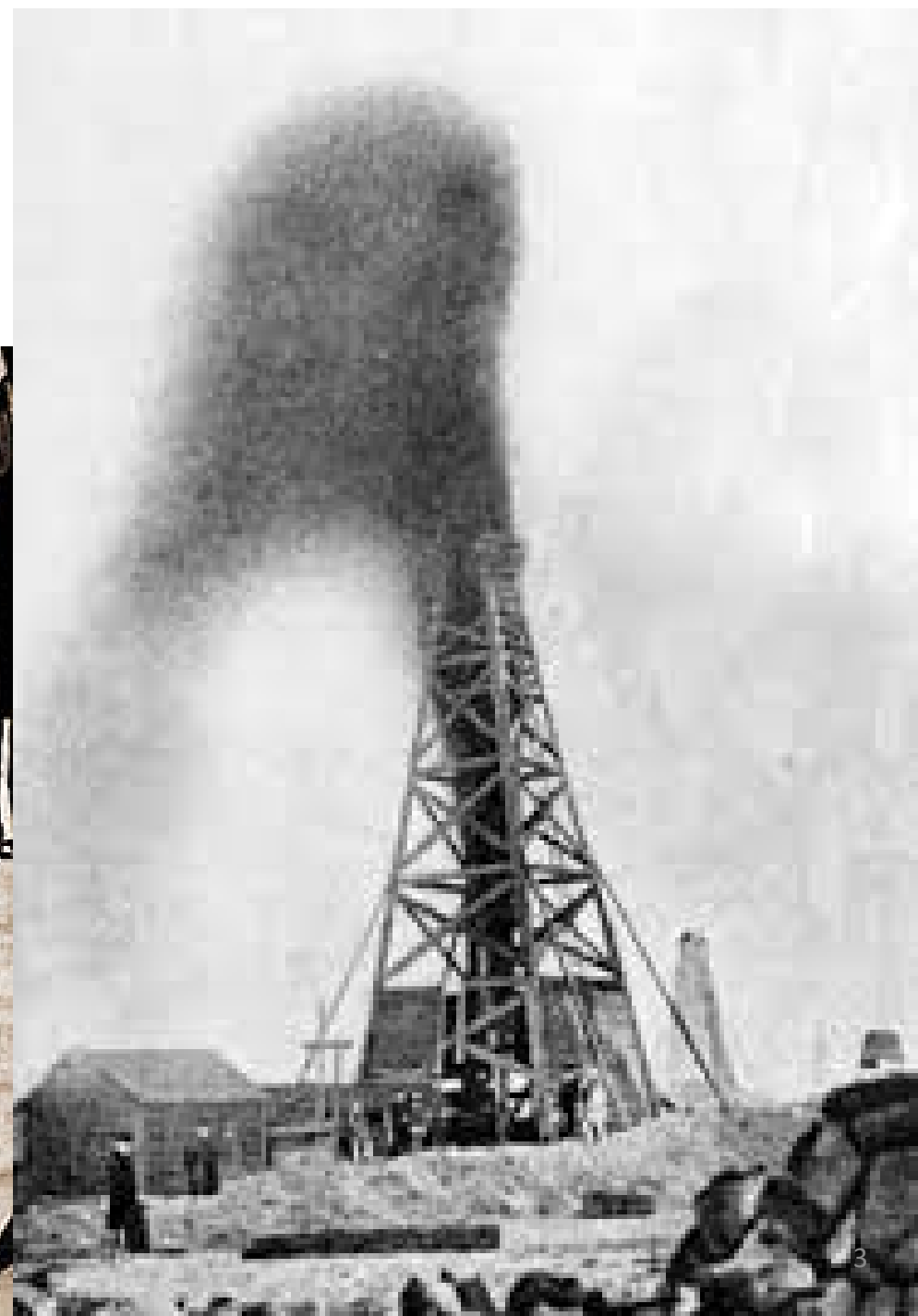


**ERICA BLYTHER | PETROLEUM ADMINISTRATOR | PUBLIC WORKS**

# Background

# LATE 1800's LOS ANGELES

Edward Doheny (center) kicks off the first oil boom in 1892 with the discovery of a gusher in present-day Echo Park



# Los Angeles Oil History

- In 1892, Edward Doheny and Charles Canfield drilled the first successful oil well in the Los Angeles City Oil Field (modern day Echo Park).
- Their discovery set off a series of major oil discoveries in the early 1900s and led to the City's first major population boom.
- While Doheny gets most of the credit for the discovery of oil in Los Angeles, Native Americans and Spanish explorers were aware of the tar pits as early as 1769 in recorded history. (The famous La Brea tar pits are located a few miles from the first oil fields.)



Los Angeles City Oil Field circa 1905. *Courtesy of Getty Images.*

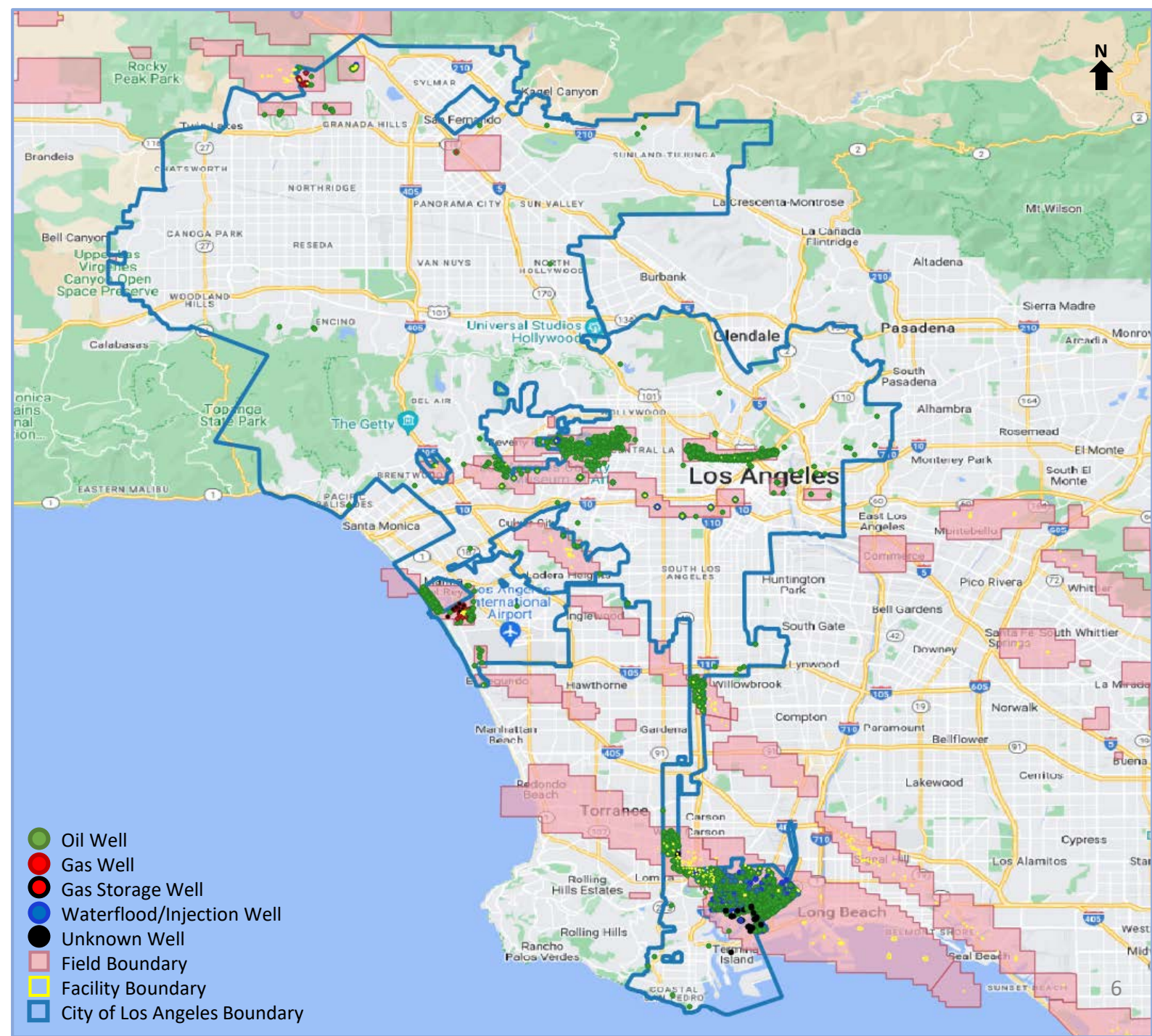
# 1920's PLAYA DEL REY



CD11 "1920's Playa Del Rey"  
© SPENCE  
*Los Angeles Public Library  
Photo Collections*

# TODAY

- The City has twenty-six (26) oil and gas fields that intersect City boundaries
- There are sixteen (16) active or idle drill sites across the City, as well as oil operations in industrial areas (Zoned M3).
- There are approximately 5,273 oil and gas wells: 660 active, 1,295 idle, 3,282 plugged, 36 Canceled and 5 unknown, 8 New and 1 Held in Abeyance wells. (*January 2023 data from CalGEM*)

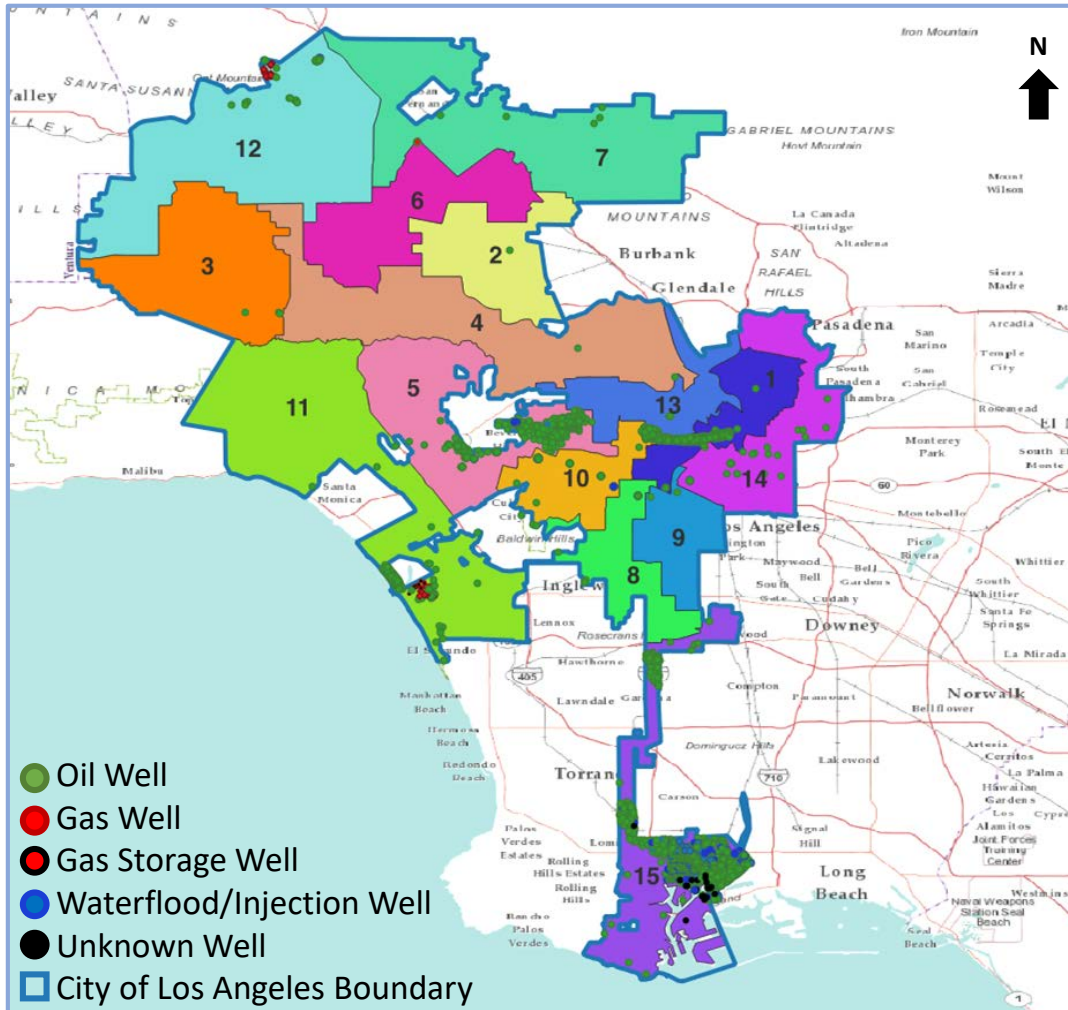


# Well Count and Status by Council District

## BACKGROUND

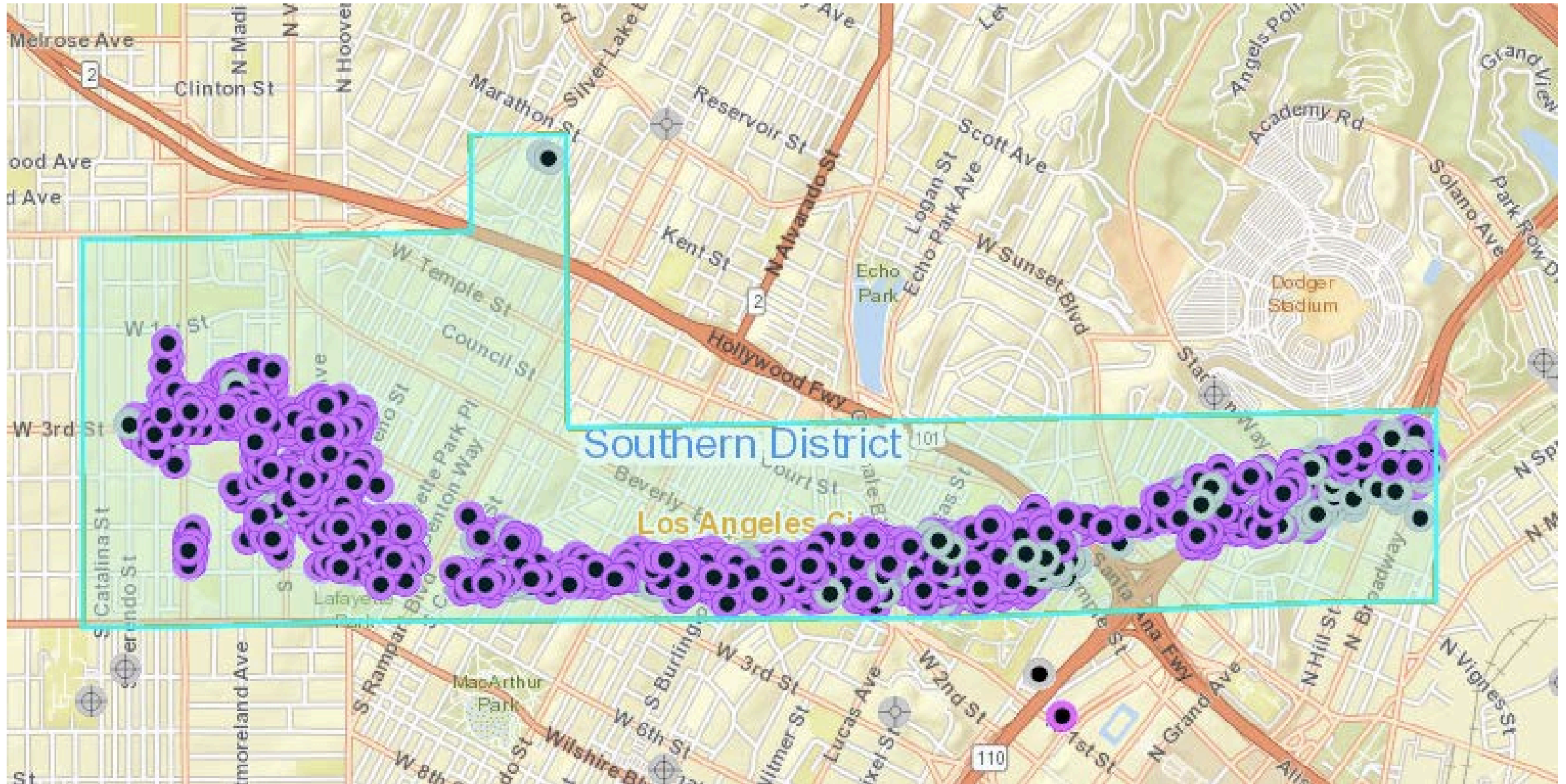
### LA City Council Districts and Wells

Data Sources: CalGEM and LA GeoHub



Council District	Active Wells	Idle Wells	Plugged Wells	Canceled Wells	Total
1. Eunisses Hernandez	2	622	302	0	926
2. Adrin Nazarian	0	1	3	0	4
3. Bob Blumenfield	0	3	2	0	5
4. Nithya Raman	0	2	3	0	5
5. Katy Yaroslavsky	114	91	514	2	721
6. Imelda Padilla	0	0	11	0	11
7. Monica Rodriguez	0	5	27	0	32
8. Marqueece Harris Dawson	0	4	47	0	51
9. Curren D. Price Jr.	0	0	7	0	7
10. Heather Hutt	72	81	76	4	233
11. Traci Park	37	11	337	1	386
12. John Lee	42	7	87	2	138
13. Hugo Soto-Martinez	0	217	41	0	258
14. Ysabel J. Jurado	8	29	53	1	91
15. Tim McOsker *(Also 8 New & 1 Held in Abeyance)	385	222	1,770	26	2,403
<b>Total:</b>	<b>660</b>	<b>1,295</b>	<b>3,282</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>5,273</b>

## Idle Wells in Council District 1



***According to DOGGR's 2018 records, 854 wells currently sit idle on the four-mile stretch of the Los Angeles City Oil Field. From DeSmog.***

# DEFINITIONS

**CalGEM:** Effective January 1, 2020, California's regulatory entity for oil, gas, and geothermal production has an updated focus and a new name: The California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM). Housed within the California Department of Conservation, CalGEM replaces the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR). This change came as a result of Assembly Bill 1057 (Assemblymember Limon, D-Santa Barbara), which was signed by Governor Newsom on October 12, 2019.

The division began in 1915, when the focus was on the development and production of petroleum resources. The mission has since evolved, and protection of public health, safety, and the environment are heightened priorities. In addition, CalGEM is also helping to guide the broader transition to a low-carbon future.

**Oil and Gas:** A well producing Oil and Gas (in the LA area: water, oil and gas are produced from wells)

**Waterflood:** In drill sites or extraction sites there are also injection wells. Injection wells are used for waterflood, steamflood, cyclic steam, and water disposal. These wells are used to safely dispose of the salt and fresh water produced with oil and gas and are used to increase oil and gas production. About 15 times more water than oil is produced from California's oil and gas fields. Drill sites have both oil and injection (or injector) well types. California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM, formerly DOGGR) engineers monitor all wells to ensure that they are operated and closed properly.

# DEFINITIONS

**Unknown:** Unknown wells are wells with little to no information and are from the pre-1976 era of wells drilled within the City.

**Plugged:** A plugged well has been abandoned and plugged/permanently sealed with a cement plug in compliance with current regulations. (Note: Some legacy oil wells that were previously abandoned may need to be re-abandoned in order to comply with current regulations.) Also sometimes called “Capped”, “Sealed”, “Closed” or “Abandoned”.

**Abandonment:** Permanent closure and sealing of a well by placing cement and/or other approved materials in the wellbore or casing, as specified in California laws or regulations.

**Idle:** An idle well is an oil well that has not been used for production or injection for six consecutive months in two or more years, **but is capable of being reactivated**. It has not been plugged or abandoned. **\*Note “Idle”** is a term from CalGEM. The LA City Fire Department has a slightly different nomenclature and definition from the fire code **“Non-Operating Oil wells”** 5706.3.16.1 Non-Operating oil wells. Any oil well which has not been secured in compliance with the provisions of Section 5706.3.15, or which, for a continuous period of 1 year has not been in operation or has ceased to produce petroleum or natural gas shall either be abandoned or reactivated within 30 days after notice has been given by the Chief.

# DEFINITIONS

**Orphan Wells:** An idle well that has no operator or other responsible party to pay for its costs becomes an “idle-deserted” or “orphan” well, which is then the responsibility of the state to plug and abandon (CA Public Resources Code §3251, §3206.3). Orphan wells and facilities have no responsible, solvent operator to maintain, repair, or plug and abandon them. These wells can leak oil, emit air emissions, including methane (a potent greenhouse gas) and pose physical hazards, potentially threatening public health, safety, and the environment. In the absence of a solvent responsible party, the state, through CalGEM, must assume the responsibility of eliminating risks and hazards associated with these wells and facilities. There are currently approximately 5,300 orphan or likely orphan wells in California.

Evidence of desertion includes:

- An idle well with unpaid assessments (typically 3 years) or with failed pipeline assessments, without any appeals in a three-month period,
- A well which has not been operated and/or maintained in accordance with regulations,
- An Idle well without an Idle well management plan

# Orphan Well Counts

# Orphan Well Count in California

- 5,296 Orphan wells statewide
- Five tiers 1-5
- Tier 1 representing the highest risk wells.
- CalGEM used CalEnviroScreen 4.0 and SB535 to identify wells that were the highest priority and will benefit the most vulnerable communities.
- 1,460 of the 5,296 wells are categorized as “Inaccessible” (i.e. buried under buildings, etc.)

# Orphan Well Count in City of Los Angeles


- 994 Orphan wells
- 889 “Inaccessible” (i.e. buried under buildings, etc.)
- Of the remaining 105:
  - 19 are categorized as Tier 1
  - 72 are categorized as Tier 2
  - 13 are categorized as Tier 3
  - 1 is categorized as Plugged and Abandoned

# LA City Planning's Oil Well GIS Dashboard

- LA City Planning has been working closely with OPNGAS
- LA City Planning has created an Oil Well GIS Dashboard
- Data Source is CalGEM data
- LA City Planning has GIS resources and data, including the dashboard and is capable of reproducing and/or expanding City oil well data that was useful for the Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance and that could be useful for the Amortization studies and research on oil wells near sensitive uses.
- Dashboard and Web App Link (Accessible within the City):  
<https://dcpgisportal.insidela.org/portal/apps/experiencebuilder/experience/?id=19b35b13848147a1a7a3b2cd1815a644>

# LA City Planning's Oil Well GIS Dashboard

Power BI Dashboard




## Welcome to LA's Oil and Gas Wells Dashboard


Page Navigation

Home → ⓘ

- Home
- Summary
- Policy Remediation
- Orphan Wells
- Maps of City Wells
- Wells Ownership
- Wells Near Sensitive Use Sites
- Well Status Change Tracker
- Council District Report
- Oil Fields Analysis



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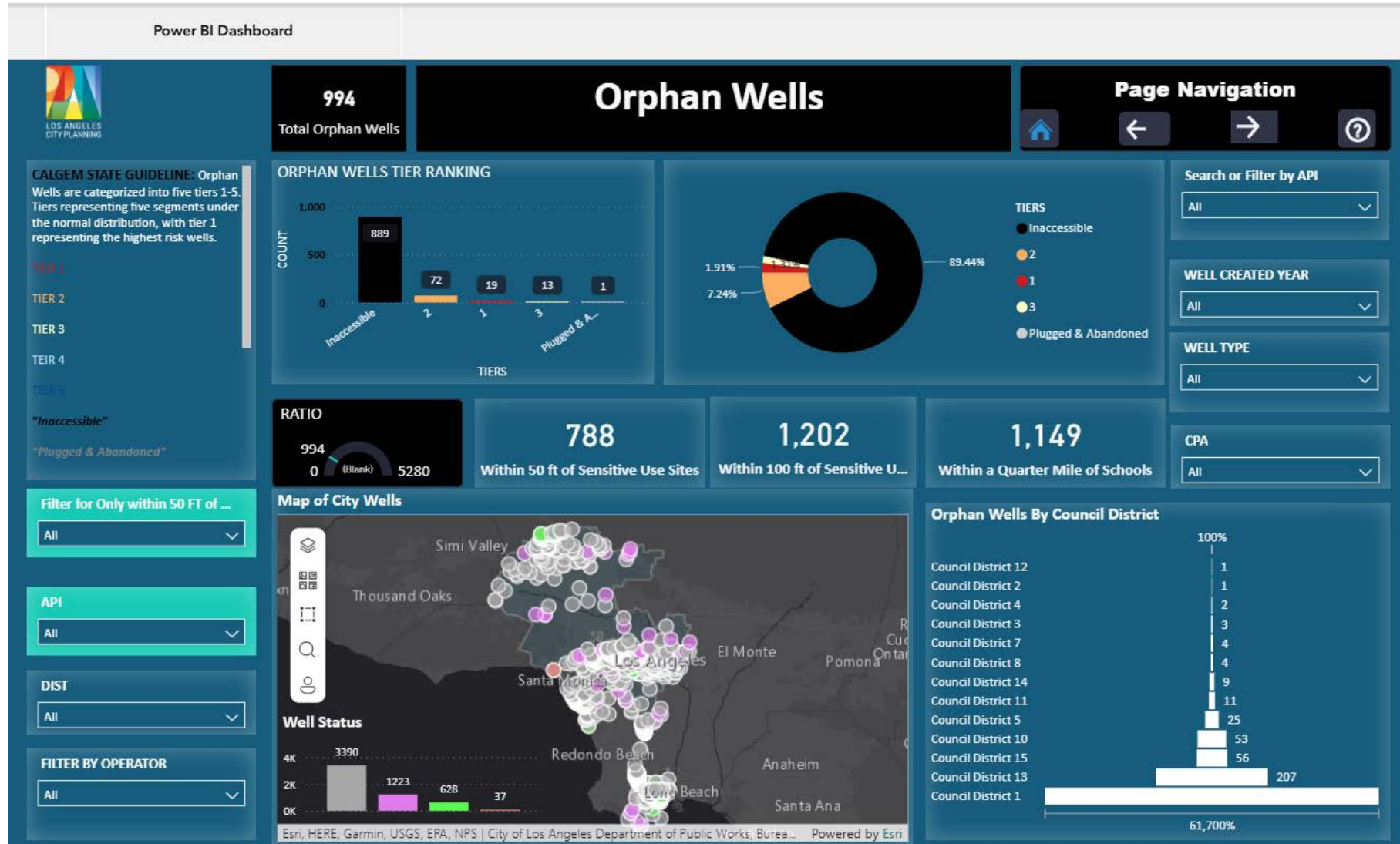


Created by Department of City Planning, GIS Section of the IT Department      Report Last Updated: *Monday, October 06, 2025*

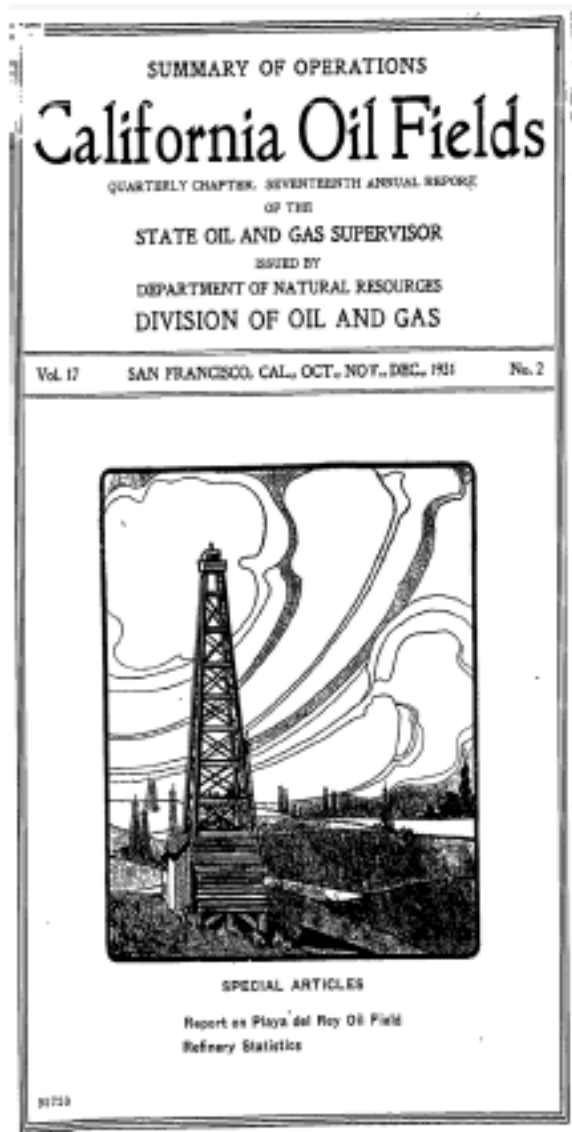
- Created by the Department of City Planning, GIS Section of the IT Department
- Orphan Well Tab

# LA City Planning's Oil Well GIS Dashboard

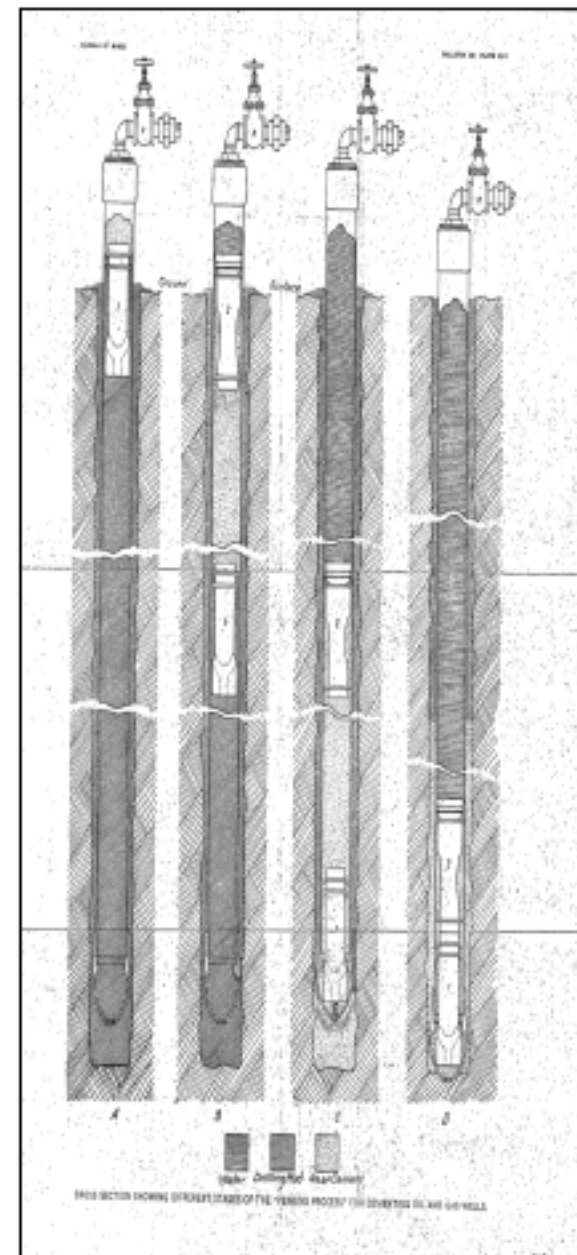
- Orphan Well Tab



# 1930s Practices



Many wells throughout America were completed with Stove Pipe and even Wooden casings (see photo). Review of the 1931 publication of the state shows that SP casing was used not only in the Playa Del Rey field, but “throughout” California. In fact, many water shut off casings were not even cemented, but simply “Landed” as documented in the 1931 publication. Moreover, few wells in the 1930s had fully cemented annular spaces behind casing strings! A common cementing method used in the area was the “Perkins Method”, which is a pressure method and patented in the 1920s.



## ***Casing from a 1930 Unplugged Well***

The photos here show a casing retrieved from a well drilled in 1930 and abandoned after production hit economic limits. The casing shows severe corrosion after being exposed to groundwater since the time of abandonment. This is common to *\*ANY\** well plugging contractor experienced in plugging old wells!



# Costs

**June 2016:**

CalGEM (then DOGGR), AQMD, and Council District 1 worked to close 2 orphan wells (Patel 1 and Rogalske 10) on Firmin Street expending the entirety of the State's Orphan well budget for the year.



*Photo From DeSmog: Rosalinda Morales (center) with the contractors capping an orphan well on Firmin Street.  
Credit: Courtesy of Rosalinda Morales*

## Well Closure Costs:

Per recent CalGEM Data: "Between 2017-2020 the State abandoned four orphaned wells in Los Angeles County for a total cost of \$1,444,928." That averages out to **\$361,232/ well**.

Per my Office's July 2019 Health Report, p.126

([https://cityclerk.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2017/17-0447\\_rpt\\_BPW\\_07-29-2019.pdf](https://cityclerk.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2017/17-0447_rpt_BPW_07-29-2019.pdf))

"The abandonment of an oil well in the Los Angeles Region can cost anywhere from \$50,000 to \$500,000 per well according to news reports from CIPA. The two (2) wells recently abandoned on Firmin Street in the Echo Park area of the City cost the state about \$375,000.

Sixty-Five percent (65%) of active and idle wells are located within drill sites which should be on the lower end of the cost scale. The remaining wells will likely require higher abandonment costs due to their locations in difficult to access urban settings. Drill site well abandonments are estimated to cost **\$250,000** per well...Non-drill site wells are estimated to cost **\$375,000** per well..."

# July 2017:

Predecessor Uduak-Joe Ntuk, at the time a consultant for LA City, worked with CalGEM (then DOGGR) on lists of Orphan Wells in LA City. Created a list of 56 orphan wells (including Knapp3).

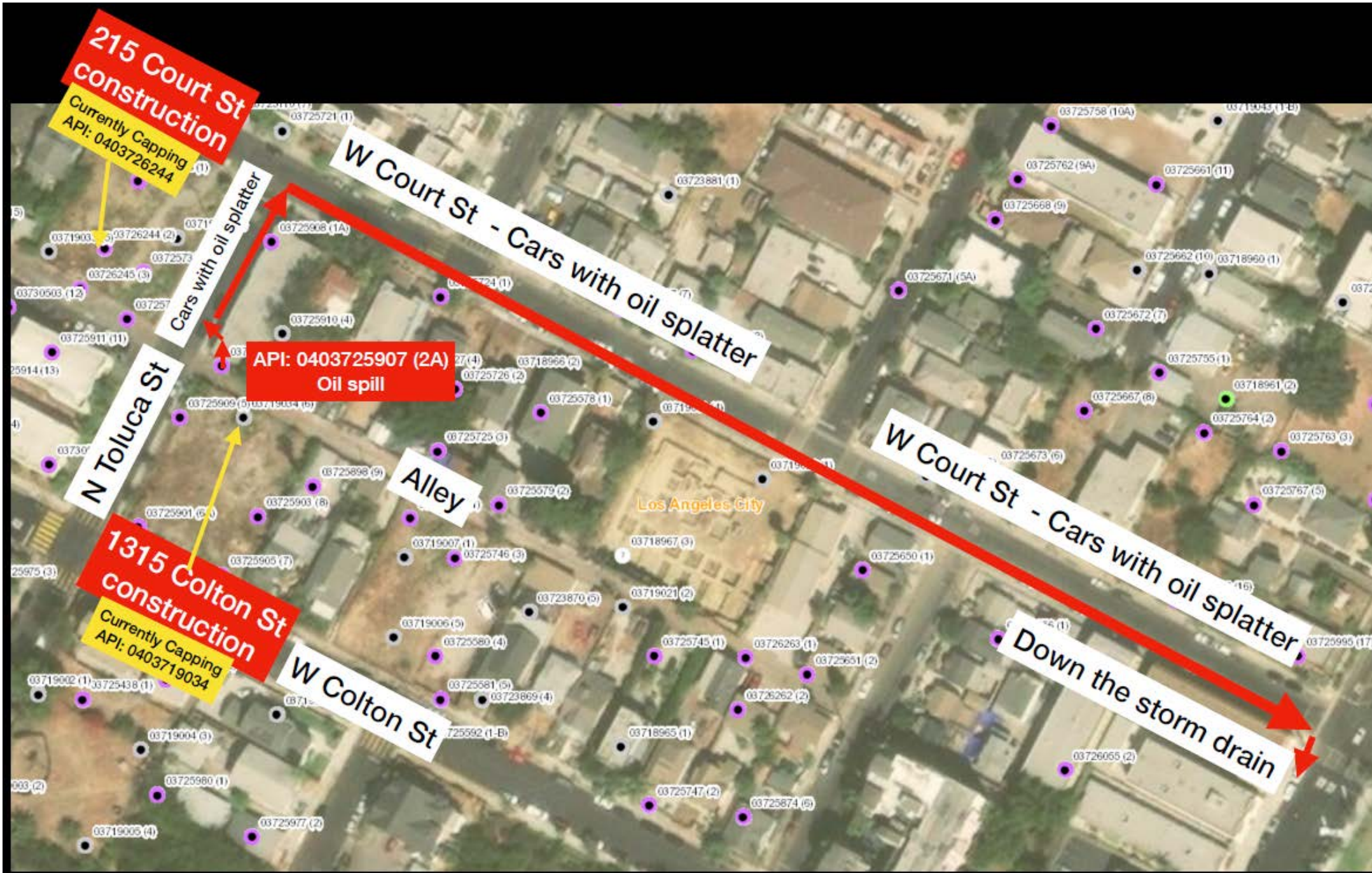
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	
1	Operator Code	Operator Active	Operator Name	Field Name	Well Designation	API Number	Well Status Code	CalWIMS Well Status	Well Status
2	K2100	FALSE	Frank Knapp	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	"Knapp" 3	03700494	I	I	
3	00285	FALSE	Amazon Drilling Corp.	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	"Baldwin" 1	03705114	B	B	
4	01055	FALSE	C. Bell	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03705189	B	B	
5	01125	FALSE	C.M. Cotton-V.L. Fleming	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03705326	B	B	
6	03473	FALSE	Golden Gate Oil Co.	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03705431	B	B	
7	00568	FALSE	B. J. Jeffrey	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	2	03705527	B	B	
8	00086	FALSE	A.L. Kitselman	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	"Del Rey" 2	03705547	I	I	
9	05421	FALSE	Los Angeles Harbor Oil Dev. Co.	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03705590	B	B	
10	07339	FALSE	R-K Drilling Co. Inc.	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03705788	P	P	
11	07302	FALSE	Richgrove Oil Co.	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03705801	B	B	
12	07632	FALSE	San Pedro Oil Co.	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03705838	B	B	
13	07673	FALSE	Santa Fe Springs Mutual Oil Syndicate	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03705846	B	B	
14	07776	FALSE	Sentinel Oil Co.	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03705859	B	B	
15	07991	FALSE	Southwest Petroleum Corp.	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	"Ramsaur" 1	03705936	B	B	
16	09348	FALSE	Wm Sullivan	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03706016	B	B	
17	08751	FALSE	Ventura Oil syndicate #1	Los Angeles Co. - No Field	1	03706212	B	B	

# Problems

## December 2019: Hear about oil well release. Raised awareness of issues in CD 1 and the Echo Park and Vista Hermosa Neighborhood Council Representatives

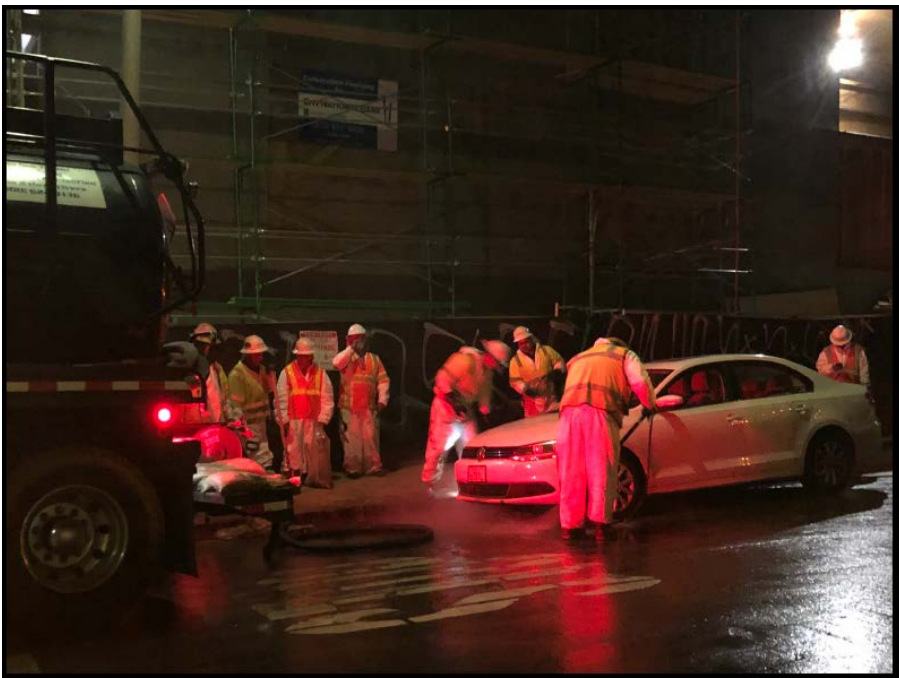


- On 12/18/2019 an oil release occurred near a well abandonment. ~ 42 gallons of crude oil was released from an abandoned oil well located at 210 Toluca Ave.
- The crude oil release contaminated a storm water sump on private property located at 220 Toluca Ave. and was then discharged and contaminated approximately 1,400 feet of curb and gutter on the public right-of-way before it entered into a storm drain catch basin.
- Crew members from a nearby AllenCo rig noticed the surface expression at approximately 4:00 pm at 12/18/2019.
- The City of Los Angeles Fire Department was notified and arrived on site around 4:00 pm.
- Patriot Environmental Services was hired by AllenCo and arrived on site to clean the spill. The City of Los Angeles Watershed Protection Division Responded on 12/18/19 and oversaw the cleanup. No oil to waterway.
- January 9, 2020 CalGEM issued a NOV for failure to report the spill



*From presentation by Rosalinda Morales and Danny Luna*

# Oil Spill Coordination



Oil splatter on cars on N Toluca St and W Court St



Oil splatter on cars on N Toluca St and W Court St

*From City Watch and presentation  
by Rosalinda Morales and Danny Luna*

# Development over wells: News Story

**4-27-2020 City Watch** Submerged Oil Well Spills Crude Oil onto Street in Central City West <https://www.citywatchla.com/index.php/cw/los-angeles/19676-submerged-oil-well-spills-crude-oil-onto-street-in-central-city-west>

*“The oil poured into the apartment’s drainage system then out, and down Toluca Street. It traced the hillside slope eastward on Court Street and ran for about a thousand feet to the nearest rain-capture drain on Boylston Street.*

*Two months later, on Thursday, February 20, City Council District 1 held a public town hall meeting at the Echo Park Community Center. First responders provided brief reports about when they arrived at the site of the oil spill and engaged in a question-and-answer period with the residents.”*

A number of agencies were represented at the town hall: CalGEM, LAFD, Watershed Protection, LA County Public Health and my office. CalGEM, Watershed and Public Health did most of the talking.



- **2-13-2020 DeSmog** California Lagged in Capping Century-old Oil Wells Leaking Under Homes of LA Residents Plagued by Illness and Odors <https://www.desmog.com/2020/02/13/los-angeles-vista-hermosa-cap-orphan-oil-wells-leaking-doggr/>
- “Under his property, Majano had discovered an ancient oil well, leaking potentially toxic gases. Firmin Street sits directly atop the Los Angeles City Oil Field, where, during the first half of the twentieth century, thousands of active oil wells dotted the four-mile stretch from Downtown to Hollywood.”

*From DeSmog Roger Majano and Rosalinda Morales next to “Patel 2,” an above-ground idle oil well at the end of Firmin Street in Los Angeles. Credit: © Marissa Pianko*

# OPNGAS Work

**September 26, 2021: Approached by Mayor's Office with opportunity to provide a tour**

“Secretary Haaland is going to be visiting LA and they are asking for some assistance putting together an event highlighting the funding in the reconciliation bill to fund plugging of abandoned oil wells and urging it be included in the final package.”

Ultimately rescheduled to **December 10, 2021**

***Why is this important?***

***Potential to close so many more Orphan wells with better  
funding resources***

## **November 22 to December 9, 2021**

Petroleum Administrator coordinated with Federal, state and local government officials including Council offices and the Mayor for an LA area oil well tour event for Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland in support of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).

Reached out to Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History for the photo of land while it had oil production circa 1890-1920

Obtained high resolution photo from Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History

Reached out to CalGEM for high resolution photos of other high priority wells

Worked with City print shop to make billboards of photos



Vista Hermosa  
Park/Echo Park in  
1900s

California - Los Angeles - Oil wells, First St and Edgeware Road ca.1890-1920  
Photo from Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.



June 3, 2021 at 7:00:45 AM

Knapp 3 (Frank Knapp), API # 037-00494, El Escorpión Park, Photo by CalGEM



June 3, 2021 at 7:08:59 AM

Knapp 1, API # 037-01161, El Escorpión Park, Photo by CalGEM

**November 30, 2021**

Attended CalGEM Oil and Gas State Abandonment Planning Workshop  
(Screening criteria and sites of interest)

**December 10, 2021**

Echo Park Oil Well Tour - Firman Street and Media Event at Vista Hermosa Park

Petroleum Administrator coordinated with Federal, state and local government officials including Council offices and the Mayor for an LA area oil well tour event for Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland in support of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).



From Left to Right:  
Erica Blyther- *LA City Petroleum Administrator*  
Lauren Faber  
O'Connor- *Chief Sustainability Officer*  
Wendy Carrillo- *Assemblywoman District 51*  
Eric Garcetti- *Mayor of Los Angeles*  
Deb Haaland- *Secretary of the Department of Interior.*  
CM Gil Cedillo- *Councilmember Council District 1 Community Representatives*  
Danny Luna  
and Rosalinda Morales

**Secretary Deb Haaland Echo Park Oil Well Tour December 10, 2021- Firman Street**

From Left to Right-  
Erica Blyther- *LA City Petroleum Administrator*  
Uduak-Joe Ntuk- *State Oil & Gas Supervisor*  
Deb Haaland- *Secretary of the Department of Interior*  
Gil Cedillo- *Councilmember Council District 1*  
Mitch O'Farrell- *Councilmember Council District 13*  
Eric Garcetti- *Mayor of Los Angeles*  
Wendy Carrillo- *Assemblywoman District 51*



Vista Hermosa Park  
Developed in  
collaboration with the Los  
Angeles Unified School  
District and the City of  
Los Angeles, Vista  
Hermosa is the first public  
park built in this densely  
populated area in more  
than a hundred years.  
There were idle wells  
around this site that had  
to be remediated in order  
to complete the project.  
Site dedicated July 2008.  
(<https://mrca.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Vista-Hermosa-Natural-Park.pdf>)

**Secretary Deb Haaland Speaking Event at Vista Hermosa Park, December 10, 2021**

SpectrumNews1  
Article "Federal  
government will  
help clean up LA's  
1,300 oil wells"  
(<https://spectrumnews1.com/ca/la-west/environment/2021/12/11/federal-government-will-help-clean-up-la-s-1-300-oil-wells->)



Oil wells at First Street and Edgeware Road in LA circa 1920. (Photo courtesy of the Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History)

ENVIRONMENT

### Federal government will help clean up LA's 1,300 oil wells

BY SUSAN CARPENTER | LOS ANGELES  
PUBLISHED 6:34 PM PT DEC. 10, 2021



ANGELINO HEIGHTS, Calif. — Hollywood may be LA's best-known industry, but a century ago, it was oil. In the 1920s, the city was home to thousands of wells producing a quarter of the world's petroleum.

Today, 700 of those wells are still active, and another 600 have been abandoned within city limits, emitting climate-changing methane gas and polluting groundwater.

#### What You Need To Know

- LA has more than 1,300 oil wells
- The city is eligible for some of the \$4.7 billion the federal infrastructure spending package has earmarked for oil well cleanup
- LA Mayor Eric Garcetti declared an oil well moratorium for the city in April 2021
- California has more than 5,000 oil wells eligible for the new federal funding

"LA County has one of the highest concentrations of oil and gas wells of any city in the entire country, with some recent estimates suggesting that 500,000 people in LA live within a half mile of a well," U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland said Friday during a visit to Vista Hermosa Natural Park in LA, where a pair of orphaned wells two blocks from the park are still leaking. "Those wells have serious impacts on the health and wellbeing of the community and the planet."



Earlier in the day, Haaland joined LA Mayor Eric Garcetti, LA City Councilmembers Gil Cedillo and Mitch O'Farrell and California Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo to visit some of the area's orphaned wells, which are poised to receive millions in federal aid money for cleanup as part of the bipartisan infrastructure package President Biden signed into law last month.

The law earmarks \$16 billion for investments in legacy pollution cleanups, including \$4.7 billion to help states and tribes address orphan well sites and \$11.3 billion for abandoned mine land and water reclamation projects in coal communities.

# March 24, 2022: Attended CalGEM Oil and Gas State Abandonment Planning Workshop

## Criteria Example



### Other Potential Hazards

Other Potential Hazards									
IW Fluid Level	IW Cleanout	IW CIT	Well Idle (years)	Well Age (years)	Inside Proposed AE?	Total Population Percentile	CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Pollution Burden Percentile	CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Population Characteristic Percentile	SB 535 Disadvantaged Community

Please refer to California Code of Regulations § 1772.4. section for Other Potential Hazards reasons.

Criteria	Regulation	Risk Parameters	Risk Scoring/ Points	Data Source
Idle Well Fluid Level Test Result	§ 1772.4.(a)(6) § 1772.4.(a)(7)	Enter depth	1	WellSTAR
Idle Well Cleanout Tag Result	§ 1772.4.(a)(9)	Enter depth	1	WellSTAR
Idle Well Casing Integrity Test Result	§ 1772.4.(a)(9)	Pass Fail Overdue	0 1 0.5	WellSTAR
Years Idle	§ 1772.4.(a)(9)	Idle Years > 15	1	WellSTAR, Physical/Digital Well File
Age of Well	§ 1772.4.(a)(8)	Age > 25 Age > 50	1 2	WellSTAR, Physical/Digital Well File
Inside Proposed Aquifer Exemption	§ 1772.4.(a)(9)	Yes No	2 0	Aquifer Exemption team
Total Population Percentile	§ 1772.4.(a)(9)	Percentile value	Percentile/40	CalEnviroScreen 4.0
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Pollution Burden Percentile	§ 1772.4.(a)(9)	Percentile value	Percentile/20	CalEnviroScreen 4.0
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Population Characteristic Percentile	§ 1772.4.(a)(9)	Percentile value	Percentile/20	CalEnviroScreen 4.0
CalEnviroScreen 3.0 SB 535 Disadvantaged Community	§ 1772.4.(a)(9)	Yes No	5 0	CalEnviroScreen 3.0

- CalGEM developed an interactive GIS map to facilitate public engagement. The GIS map depicts the final initial screening score for each well evaluated.
- <https://cadoc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b65ba00d139845f9810f7c96f2e09c30>

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October 07, 2022

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<http://bpw.lacity.org>

The CalGEM Public Transparency Office  
[CalGEMOrphanWells@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:CalGEMOrphanWells@conservation.ca.gov)

The City of Los Angeles Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Administration and Safety (OPNGAS) is submitting this letter supporting CalGEM's Orphan Well Abandonment Program.

In 2016, per then DOGGR, in the City of Los Angeles there were 56 orphan wells visible at the surface. There were also 870 idle and buried wells, the vast majority of which were in the Los Angeles City field. The OPNGAS is very interested in how these will all be prioritized.

It is very beneficial that CalGEM has created an interactive GIS map to facilitate public engagement. It has been very interesting to note where Scenario 1 leads to different prioritization results than Scenario 2 and 3. It will be useful to review each case in depth as priorities are assigned and OPNGAS supports the incorporation of local government and public feedback in the screening process.

Methane leaks and the potential for leaks could be a useful factor in the prioritization process. The OPNGAS is excited about the opportunities that California Air Resources Board (CARB)'s new satellite data can provide in detecting methane leaks in California, once satellites are deployed in 2023. Leaks identified by satellites or other remote monitoring technology have the potential to be detected, pinpointed and repaired much more quickly. Hopefully this data can be incorporated into CalGEM's Orphan Well Abandonment Screening and Prioritization Methodology.

The OPNGAS looks forward to continued work with CalGEM to properly manage orphan wells in the City of Los Angeles to prevent impacts to the nearby communities.

Sincerely,

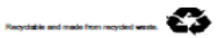
Erica Blyther  
Petroleum Administrator  
Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Administration  
City of Los Angeles | Department of Public Works  
200 N. Spring Street, Rm 358 (MS 465)  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

# September 2022:

## Attended CalGEM public meetings on Orphan Well Funding; also beginning of comment period on draft prioritization method

# October 7, 2022:

## Submitted comments on CalGEM Orphan Well screening methodology



# August 10, 2023: PA worked with the Mayor's Office to submit a comment letter

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August 10, 2023

Page 2 of 2

We are glad to see that Tribal representatives will be notified if a CEQA Initial Study is required for the plugging and abandonment process. This is especially important in the Canoga Park area in El Escorpión Park where the Knapp 1 and Knapp 3 wells are located and there are tribal cultural resources including a Lime Kiln constructed between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by native Chumash people.

The Canoga Park wells have been on the City's radar for a while and in fact CalGEM's photos of these wells and leaks were instrumental in showing Interior Secretary Deb Haaland on her December 2021 LA City visit, how the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funds could benefit the City and the State.

The City is looking forward to future annual updates to the list of prioritized wells and continuing to work with CalGEM as a partner. The City plans to engage in discussions to identify wells that are priorities for local communities and will continue to add to the project list.

Sincerely,

Erica Blyther  
Petroleum Administrator  
Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Administration  
City of Los Angeles | Department of Public Works  
200 N. Spring Street, Rm 358 (MS 465)  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

August 10, 2023

The CalGEM Public Transparency Office  
[CalGEMOrphanWells@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:CalGEMOrphanWells@conservation.ca.gov)

### CalGEM Draft State Orphan Well Abandonment Expenditure Plan

The City of Los Angeles Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Administration and Safety (OPNGAS) is submitting this letter to comment on the CalGEM Draft State Orphan Well Abandonment Expenditure Plan. Thank you for the opportunity to review this expenditure plan. We truly appreciate the transparency and extensive details on all aspects of the expenditure plan.

We are glad that CalEnviroScreen 4.0 and SB535 criteria were used to identify wells that were the highest priority and will benefit the most vulnerable communities. Regarding the Allen Co wells, as noted in the plan, the community has long been concerned with these wells and we are happy to have CalGEM support on closing them expeditiously.

We are pleased with the workforce development plan for transitioning oil and gas workers as this closely aligns with the LA City LA County Just Transition Taskforce goals that the City has been working towards. The requirement to enter into a project labor agreement (PLA) for well abandonment work by January 1, 2028 is admirable. We recognize that the January 1, 2028 date is a statutory deadline set by SB 1295 that CalGEM must implement. However, we recommend that CalGEM work to identify a plan to implement this goal ahead of the deadline, especially as, per the attached Encumbrance Goal, the vast majority of the funds (~\$257.2 of the \$317.2 million) will be spent before January 2028. The LA Just Transition Task force would appreciate being involved in the effort for the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) pilot workforce training program for displaced oil and gas workers in LA County.

We are happy that the habitat restoration will be tracked via metrics. We are also happy to note that the methane emissions will be tracked pre- and post- abandonment to quantify the real greenhouse gas impacts of sealing these wells. We are curious to see how CalGEM worked with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) on development of the pre- and post-methane monitoring requirements as that was not specifically described in the plan. In addition we would ask that the methane emissions monitoring data be made available to the community via a centralized portal or in partnership with local air resources boards similar to AQMD's efforts to monitor the methane levels at Aliso Canyon (<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/news-events/community-investigations/aliso-canyon-update/air-sampling/air-monitoring-activities/continuous-methane-monitoring-data>).



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<http://bpwledy.org>

# August 2024:

- PA worked with the Mayor's Office and submitted a comment letter
- Statewide 5,296 wells. In Year 2, only 2 of the 26 wells to be abandoned in the Southern District are in the City of LA.

August 15, 2024

The CalGEM Public Transparency Office  
[CalGEMOrphanWells@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:CalGEMOrphanWells@conservation.ca.gov)

### CalGEM Draft Year 2 State Orphan Well Abandonment Expenditure Plan

The City of Los Angeles Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Administration and Safety (OPNGAS) is submitting this letter to comment on the CalGEM Year 2 Draft State Orphan Well Abandonment Expenditure Plan. Thank you for the opportunity to review this expenditure plan. We truly appreciate the transparency and extensive details on all aspects of the expenditure plan.

The City of Los Angeles has approximately 105 accessible Orphan wells that are within 50 feet of a sensitive receptor. We would like these wells to be Prioritized for proper plugging and abandonment.

In addition, we have a list of wells from our CD15 Harbor Gateway North Neighborhood Council. We understand that some wells previously categorized as "Plugged" or "Buried" have now been changed to "Idle" in WellStar. In cross referencing WellStar/WellFinder and the CalGEM Orphan Well Screening Prioritization, it appears that CalGEM has considered all 8 for the Orphan well funding, indicating that they are not truly "Idle" i.e. under an idle well management plan.

CalGEM has previously stated that they will not use Orphan well funds to remediate inaccessible wells, so the designation is very important. The CalGEM Orphan Well Screening Prioritization shows 6 of the 8 as inaccessible, but in looking at WellStar/WellFinder, some of the wells listed as "inaccessible" appear to be accessible, (i.e. in sidewalks, front yards or backyards). We'd like to ask CalGEM to verify that ground truthing has been performed on these wells.

API Number	WellStar/WellFinder Status	Orphan Well Screening Prioritization Status	Notes:
API 0403713640	Idle	Tier 2	Please add to Year 2 priorities
API 0403713623	Idle	Inaccessible	Looks like a sidewalk. Can this be ground truthed?
API 0403713624	Idle	Inaccessible	Looks like a backyard. Can this be ground truthed?
API 0403713569	Idle	Tier 2	Please add to Year 2 priorities
API 0403713588	Idle	Inaccessible	Looks like a front yard. Can this be ground truthed?
API 0403713578	Idle	Inaccessible	May be inaccessible
API 0403714404	Idle	Inaccessible	May be inaccessible
API 0403714384	Idle	Inaccessible	Looks like a front yard. Can this be ground truthed?



# CalGEM Orphan Well Expenditure Plan Comments



API Number	WellStar/ WellFinder Status	Orphan Well Screening Prioritization Status	Notes:
API 0403713640	Idle	Tier 2	Please add to Year 2 priorities
API 0403713623	Idle	Inaccessible	Looks like a sidewalk. Can this be ground truthed?
API 0403713624	Idle	Inaccessible	Looks like a backyard. Can this be ground truthed?
API 0403713569	Idle	Tier 2	Please add to Year 2 priorities
API 0403713588	Idle	Inaccessible	Looks like a front yard. Can this be ground truthed?
API 0403713578	Idle	Inaccessible	May be inaccessible
API 0403714404	Idle	Inaccessible	May be inaccessible
API 0403714384	Idle	Inaccessible	Looks like a front yard. Can this be ground truthed?

- Terminology: Idle versus Orphan

## March 2025:

- PA attended 2025 Orphan & Idle Wells California Conference in Bakersfield
- Networking and updates on how others are handling the issue of Orphan Wells

## OVERVIEW:

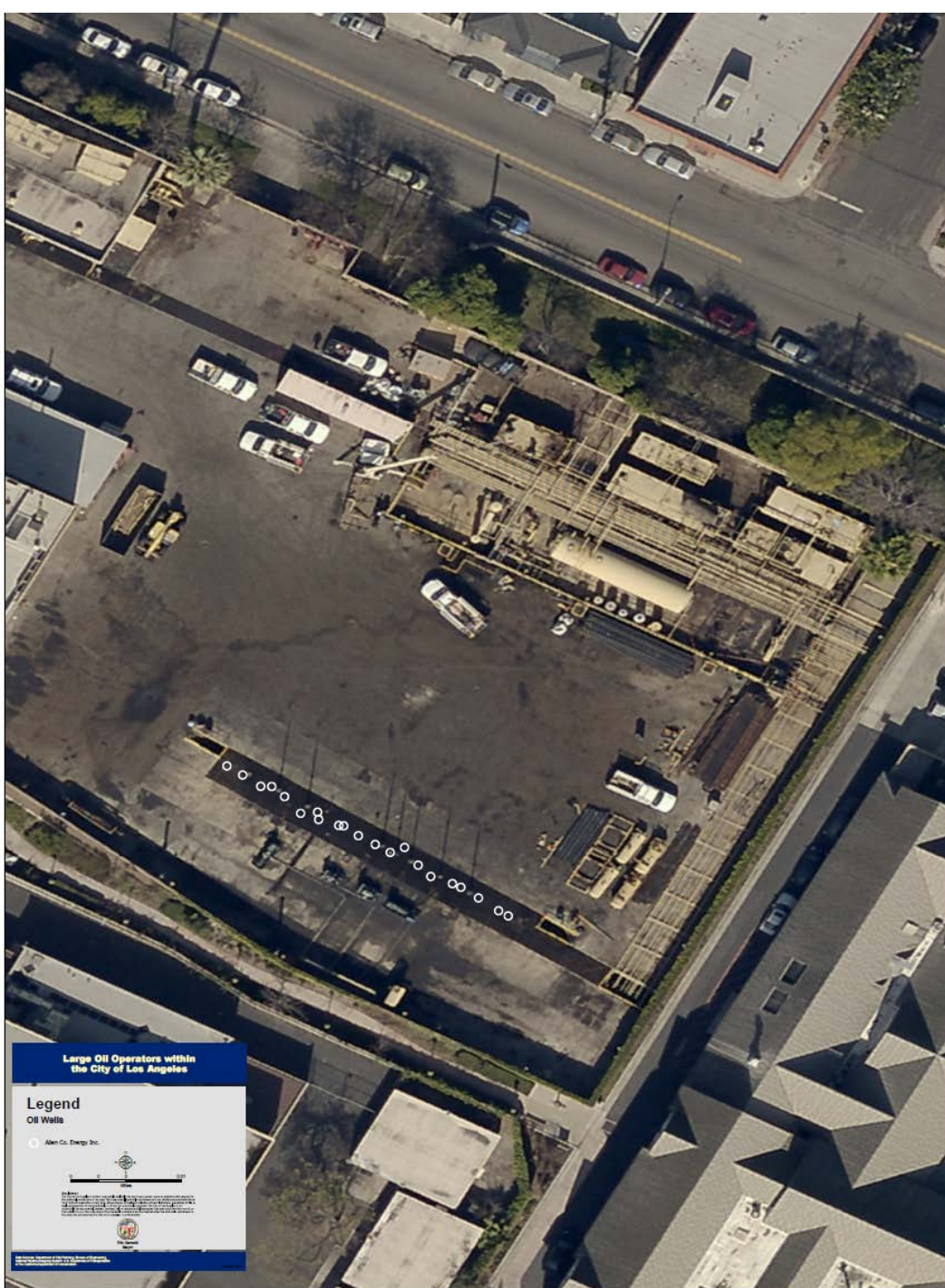
Join us at the 2025 Orphan & Idle Wells California Conference—a solutions-driven forum uniting **regulators, industry leaders, technology innovators, and community stakeholders**. As **policies evolve and government priorities shift**, this event fosters collaboration to shape the future of well decommissioning in California.

With **thousands of orphan and idle wells statewide**, tackling their **environmental, financial, and public health impacts** requires a unified approach. This year's conference explores **regulatory updates, funding opportunities, and AI-driven technologies** to streamline well-plugging efforts and reduce abandonment concerns.

Building on our successful **Orphan & Idle Wells series**, which launched in Texas in 2023, this event addresses California's **unique regulations, cutting-edge remediation strategies, and pathways to sustainable energy solutions**.

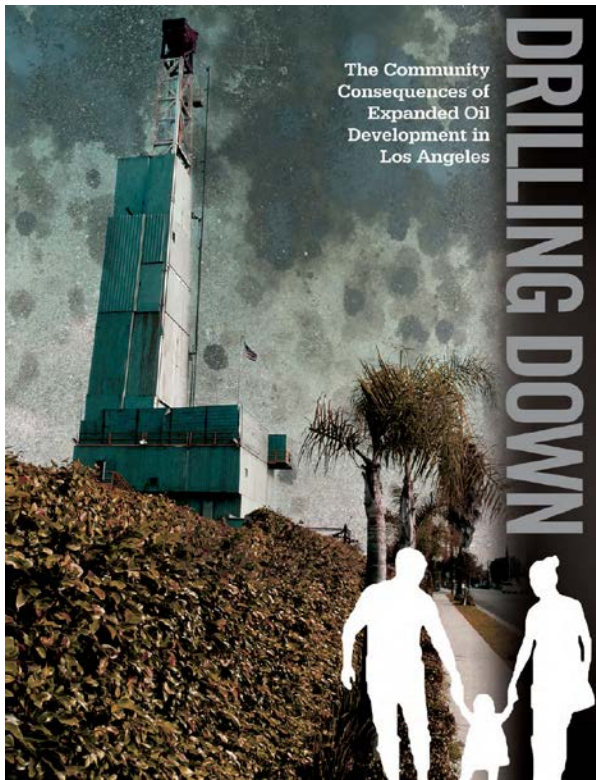


**AllenCo**



## St. James Controlled Drill Site was constructed in 1965

- Located at 814 W. 23rd Street Los Angeles, CA 90007
- 21 Idled Wells



The Community Consequences of Expanded Oil Development in Los Angeles

# DRILLING DOWN

## When Regulators Fail University Park: Allenco Drill Site

Barbara Osborn, Ph.D., *Annenberg School of Communications and Journalism, University of Southern California*

Monic Uriarte placed the first of dozens of calls to the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)'s "odor complaint" line in late 2010. She and her family smelled a strong, unpleasant odor in the air on the long weekend of the Martin Luther King holiday. They had smelled odors before, but not like this. In the past, odors had passed in minutes. Monic began to feel nauseous. Her 10-year-old daughter Nalleli's nose began bleeding. That night, Monic turned on an air purifier in her bedroom and she, her four kids, and her mother squeezed into one room so they could sleep.



Monic Uriarte and daughter Nalleli suffered six years from unexplained health problems.

The stench persisted. Monic and her neighbors on West 23rd Street, near the University of Southern California, located the odor complaints number at the SCAQMD and began calling. That was when she realized that the narrow strip of grass across from her home, where she'd taken her kids for picnics, was the landscaped exterior of the Allenco Energy oil drilling facility. It would be years before she would learn that Allenco had recently increased its production at the site 400% (Sahagun, September 21, 2013).

After several days the smell subsided, but Nalleli began complaining of intense stomachaches and headaches. She developed heart palpitations and severe body spasms. For a time, she was not able to walk. Monic took Nalleli to a cardiologist, a gastroenterologist, and a neurologist. Nalleli had an MRI and wore a heart monitor for weeks, but doctors couldn't explain the little girl's illness.

Meanwhile, the overpowering odors came and went. Monic's neighbors called the SCAQMD regularly. They learned to provide exactly the information that SCAQMD operators required to dispatch an inspector: Their name. Their location. The location and description of the smell. They learned that the SCAQMD has to receive six calls from people in six different households before it can determine whether the odor issue is a public nuisance. It took several hours, sometimes days, for the SCAQMD to respond. Monic would call with a complaint on a Sunday, leave a message, and get a call back on Tuesday.

In the best of circumstances, neighbors would reach a live SCAQMD operator and a sufficient number of calls were made within the hour to warrant dispatching an inspector. Three or more hours later, an inspector would arrive, put his or her nose in the air and sniff. If the inspector didn't smell anything, no complaint could be filed.

For two years, community residents called the SCAQMD with hundreds of complaints and nothing changed. They still didn't understand what was making so many of them sick. The community tried to conduct its own air quality monitoring but without knowing the chemicals that were being emitted from the Allenco facility, they couldn't tell the lab what to look for. By attending a toxicologist's lecture, Monic finally identified an explanation for her daughter's illness. Nalleli's symptoms were all consistent with exposure to hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), a flammable, colorless gas that occurs naturally in petroleum and natural gas. Exposure triggers respiratory irritation, headache, dizziness, and vomiting (Sahagun, September 21, 2013).

By chance, Monic and Nalleli finally got a close look at what lay behind the high walls surrounding the Allenco facility. They'd enrolled in a local photography workshop and their assignment was to take photographs of their community. As they walked their neighborhood taking pictures, they discovered the gates of the Allenco facility open. They asked a worker if he could show them around and the man took them to see the wells. He explained he had to open release valves every 10 or 15 minutes or they would explode. Pipes near the wells read "Danger: H<sub>2</sub>S poisonous gas" (Sahagun, September 21, 2013). Monic recalls that as they entered the underground area near the wells, she felt as if "her head was going to explode," but the worker wore no protective gear and didn't suggest to Monic or her daughter that they needed any.

Neighbors began sharing information and struggling to get regulatory agencies to be more responsive. They formed a neighborhood group called "People Not Pozos." ("Pozos" is a Spanish word meaning "well.") Members of the group approached the *L.A. Times*, and after a *Times* article appeared

# Drilling Down Report by Liberty Hill 2015

*They learned that the SCAQMD has to receive six calls from people in six different households before it can determine whether the odor issue is a public nuisance.*



Nalleli and her neighbors do not want the Allenco facility to reopen.

In September 2013, Senator Barbara Boxer's office got involved. Suddenly, regulatory agencies became responsive. The SCAQMD began returning Monic's calls within two hours instead of two days. Investigators from the United States

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) came to the neighborhood and were sickened on the site (Sahagun, November 8, 2013).

Late in November 2013, Allenco agreed to temporarily close the facility. For the first time in years, residents were able to enjoy Thanksgiving with their windows open. Their symptoms cleared. Monic had no headaches. Nalleli's nosebleeds and stomachaches disappeared.

Two months later, the EPA cited Allenco for jeopardizing the health of the community (Sahagun, January 15, 2014). The L.A. City Attorney's office filed suit, citing SCAQMD monitoring that now revealed elevated

concentrations of hydrocarbons and other chemicals like methane, ethane, benzene, and propane, plus hydrogen sulfide and other sulfur compounds. Allenco agreed to make \$700,000 in upgrades to comply with the federal Clean Air and Clean Water Acts (Duron 2014). In July 2014, the U.S. EPA fined Allenco \$99,000 for failure to comply with requirements around hazardous substance reporting, while the suit by the L.A. City Attorney alleged that the company was "willfully disregarding violation notices" from regulatory agencies (Sahagun, July 30, 2014).

But after years of fighting to get regulators to respond, Monic and her neighbors don't want the facility reopened. She has lost confidence that the regulatory agencies which were supposed to protect her family have made the changes in their own procedures to ensure community health in the future. Monic has lost her sense of smell, a symptom consistent with hydrogen sulfide exposure, and without it, she can't be sure she could detect toxic chemicals if she were exposed to them.

Nancy Ibrahim, executive director of the Esperanza Community Housing Corporation, which owns two buildings on 23rd Street near the Allenco facility and whose tenants were affected by the fumes, says, "Since 2011, residents logged in hundreds of phone complaints to SCAQMD and nothing changed. This is a residential community with nine educational institutions and early childcare facilities. Residents were left entirely unprotected by the regulations that are supposed to protect them. SCAQMD's current procedures are not adequate to safeguard the health of this or any other neighborhood."

MAP 4: Land use within 1,500 Feet of the Allenco Energy Oil Facility in University Park



(Data from Southern California Association of Governments 2008).

***From CalGEM's Orphan Well Expenditure Plan 2023 (p.27):***

AllenCo Energy, Inc., 21 wells and onsite tank facility in Los Angeles. This Southern District operator has 21 wells and an onsite tank facility located in Los Angeles, California in the Las Cienegas field, approximately 1,000 feet west and 2,000 feet south of where the 110 and 10 freeways intersect. The location is situated between Saint James Park to the south, residential properties to the north, and St. Vincent Elementary School approximately 800 feet to the southeast, and is located within an SB 535 Disadvantaged Community.

For the past decade, the City of Los Angeles, CalGEM, and other agencies have taken numerous enforcement and legal actions in response to concerns that AllenCo was in violation of California's oil and gas laws, public health, and safety laws, air and water quality protection laws, and fire and safety and odor regulations. The local community has also expressed serious concerns and has called for the clean-up of this site. In September 2019, CalGEM issued an order to AllenCo to depressurize the wells, with which AllenCo refused to comply. CalGEM hired a contractor to depressurize the wells, to help ensure the site remained safe for the community. In 2020, CalGEM also ordered AllenCo to permanently close its Saint James drill site.

The State has engaged contractors to perform the plugging and abandonment work and has created the following website where updates can be found:

(<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/State-Abandonments.aspx>)

- **December 3, 2024:** the project was approved by the Department of the Interior (DOI) and work began to **abandon all 21 wells** at the AllenCo site.
- **December 12, 2024:** Starting in late December 2024, the Department of Conservation (DOC) and contractor, Driltek, will permanently close 20 oil and gas wells at the Allen Co Energy "Saint James" drill site in Los Angeles. This plan provides community members with essential information about work schedules, safety measures, and emergency contacts. After completion, all oil and gas operation hazards will be removed from the site (*Latest website update*).

<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/State-Abandonments.aspx>)

- **August 1, 2025:** To date, the Department of Conservation (DOC) and contractor, Driltek has plugged **11 of the 21** “Saint James” drill site wells. Other wells have had some partial abandonment completed, but these wells are still undergoing observation before completing those abandonments. The project is expected to be completed by second quarter of 2026 calendar year.
- **September 5, 2025:** To date, the Department of Conservation (DOC) and contractor, Driltek, has plugged **13 of the 21** “Saint James” drill site wells. Other wells have had some partial plugging and sealing completed, but these wells are still undergoing observation before completing those processes. The project is expected to be completed by first quarter of 2026 calendar year.

<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/State-Abandonments.aspx>)

- **October 1, 2025:** To date, the Department of Conservation (DOC) and contractor, Driltek, has plugged **15 of the 21** "Saint James" drill site wells. Other wells have had some partial plugging and sealing completed, but these wells are still undergoing observation before completing those processes. The project is expected to be completed by first quarter of 2026 calendar year.
- At the Monthly AllenCo Stakeholder Meetings coordinated by LA County Public Health, DOC has stated that they are ahead of schedule.

# Canoga Park



Knapp 3 (Frank Knapp), API # 037-00494, El Escorpión Park, Photo by CalGEM



Knapp 1, API # 037-01161, El Escorpión Park, Photo by CalGEM

The State has engaged contractors to perform the plugging and abandonment work and has created the following website where updates can be found:

(<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/State-Abandonments.aspx>)

- **August 11, 2025:** The INITIAL STUDY/MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION for the Permanent Sealing of Orphan Wells in Canoga Park has been released for Public Review. The project consists of the State of California's plugging and abandoning (P&A) of **six (6) orphan wells** in the inactive CalGEM-designated Canoga Park oil field (private land, no longer an active oil field), within unincorporated Los Angeles County. A portion of the Project site (where access road improvements would occur) is located **within the City of Los Angeles.**

(<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Documents/MitegatedNegativeDeclaration-CanogaParkProject.pdf>)

<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/State-Abandonments.aspx>)

**September 10, 2025:** West Hills Community Meeting – Plugging & Sealing Wells: An in-person community meeting was held from 6:00 to 7:30 pm for residents of the West Hills area to learn about upcoming work on 6 oil wells that will be plugged and sealed in the neighborhood.

- [West Hills Public Meeting- Presentation Slides \(PDF Download\)](#)

[West Hills Public Meeting Flyer Sep 10 \(PDF Download\)](#)

[Folleto de la reunión pública de West Hills del 10 de septiembre - \(Descargue el PDF\) - \(Spanish Version PDF Download\)](#)

This project Community Health, Safety, and Notification Plan provides community members with essential information about work schedules, safety measures, and emergency contacts.

- [West Hills / Canoga Park - Community Health Safety Notification Plan 09042025](#)

# Funding

## State Funding for Orphan Wells

*From CalGEM's July 2023 State Oil and Gas Well Expenditure Plan*

Currently, there are three (3) types of state funds available for Orphan Well remediation related work:

- 1) Oil, Gas and Geothermal Administrative Fund **\$5 million** per year (PRC 3258, Subd (a)) and Chapter 844, Statutes of 2022 (SB 1295, Limón) \$15 million over two years
- 2) The Hazardous and Idle-Deserted Well Abatement Fund funded by operator idle well fees and continually appropriated to CalGEM to plug and abandon wells to mitigate a hazardous or potentially hazardous condition; and
- 3) As part of the CA state budget a total of **\$100 million** from the State's General Fund was allocated over two years \$50 million in the Budget Act of 2022 and \$50 million in the Budget Act of 2023 to plug and abandon orphan and deserted wells.

## Federal Funding

*From CalGEM's July 2023 State Oil and Gas Well Expenditure Plan*

In addition, beginning in 2022, CalGEM began receiving an influx of new investment funding for orphan well and facilities remediation from Federal government sources.

The 2021 Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) included **\$4.7 billion nationwide** over a ten-year period for well plugging, remediation, and restoration. Funding for formula grants is distributed between states, based in part on state-specific numbers of oil and gas jobs (including jobs lost in the sector), the total number of orphaned wells, and the total cost estimated to plug and abandon those wells.

California has been notified of eligibility to receive **\$165.8 million** in the first two phases of the program, with additional funding to be allocated in later phases. Restrictions on the use of the funding require states to use no more than 10% of the funds for administrative costs.

## **August 2022:**

The US Department of the Interior (DOI) awarded California the maximum initial grant eligibility amount of **\$25 million** from the federal government's orphan well program authorized in the bipartisan Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). These funds are earmarked for CalGEM and available in the Federal grant financial allocation system; when invoices are received, the amount will be drawn down and transferred to California's Federal Trust Fund account within one to two days.

## **July 2023:**

The US Dept. of Interior opened the application period for the first 25% of the \$140 million formula grant monies.

CalGEM Draft Orphan Well Abandonment Expenditure Plan Year 1 released

- 21 of the 25 wells to be abandoned in LA City, are in CD1 at the former AllenCo Drill site. The 4 other orphan wells identified are in Canoga Park.

# CalGEM Orphan Well Expenditure Plan July 2023



<b>Annual Encumbrance Plan (\$ Millions)</b>			
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Federal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2022 -23</b>	\$14	\$22.5	<b>\$36.5</b>
<b>2023 -24</b>	\$27.5	\$22.5	<b>\$50</b>
<b>2024 - 25</b>	\$32.5	\$20	<b>\$52.5</b>
<b>2025 - 26</b>	\$32.5	\$30	<b>\$62.5</b>
<b>2026 -27</b>	\$25.7	\$30	<b>\$55.7</b>
<b>2027 - 28</b>	\$15	\$30	<b>\$45</b>
<b>2028 - 29</b>	\$5	\$10	<b>\$15</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$152</b>	<b>\$165</b>	<b>\$317</b>

Year 1, State Abandonment Expenditure Plan, Table 2 shows the minimum annual encumbrance goal for state and federal funding sources for the next 7 years. These goals may be modified depending on availability of state and federal formula grant monies.

Table 2. State Abandonment 7-year encumbrance goals (\$ in Millions).

# CalGEM Orphan Well Draft Expenditure Plan July 2023



State Abandonment Expenditure Plan Phase 1					
Operator	District	County	Field	Spend Plan Year	Total Number of Wells
HVI Cat Canyon - 171 Wells	Northern	Santa Barbara	Casmelia, Cat Canyc	2023	171
Citadel Exploration Inc.	Central	Kern	Kern Bluff, Any Fiel	2024	37
Griffin Resources, LLC	Central	Kern, Kings	Fruitvale	2024	25
Hartley Natural Resource Developn	Central	Kern	Edison	2024	1
Prine Oil Company	Central	Kern	Mountain View	2024	1
Sunray Petroleum, Inc.	Central	Kern	Fruitvale, Kern Bluf	2024	22
Blackstone Oil & Gas, LLC	Central	Kern	Fruitvale, Mountain	2024	37
Tri-Valley Oil & Gas Co.	Central	Kern, Fresno	Edison, Semitropic,	2024	6
Clarence R. Barnett Inc.	Northern	Ventura	Simi	2024	2
HVI Cat Canyon - Nodlew 1	Northern	Santa Barbara	Santa Maria Valley	2024	1
Peak Operator LLC	Northern	Ventura	Oxnard	2024	39
Vaca Energy, LLC	Northern	Ventura	Montalvo, West	2024	6
AllenCo Energy, Inc.	Southern	Los Angeles	Las Cienegas	2024	21
Cache Oil Co	Southern	Los Angeles	Canoga Park	2024	1
Canoga Oil Co.	Southern	Los Angeles	Canoga Park	2024	3
Crown of the Valley Oil Co.	Southern	Orange	Brea-Olinda	2024	1
Estate of Harold C. Morton	Southern	Los Angeles	Long Beach	2024	1
Rex Oil Co.	Southern	Orange	Huntington Beach	2024	1
Santa Ana Canyon Dev. Corp.	Southern	Orange	Esperanza	2024	1
Frank Knapp	Southern	Los Angeles	Canoga Park	2024	1
<b>Total:</b>					<b>378</b>

- In Year 1, of the 25 wells to be abandoned in the City of LA, 21 are in CD1.
- 4 others in Canoga Park (Knapp1 and Knapp 3)

## **May 2024:**

The US Dept. of Interior announced California will receive the first tranche of **\$35 million**.

## **July 2024:**

Year 2 July 16 – August 19: 45-day public comment period on Phase 2 State Abandonment Draft Expenditure Plan

# Biden-Harris Administration Invests \$775 Million from Investing in America Agenda for States to Plug Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells

 Share 

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding is addressing legacy pollution, spurring economic growth nationwide

08/14/2024

Last edited 08/14/2024

Date: Wednesday, August 14, 2024

Contact: [Interior\\_Press@ios.doi.gov](mailto:Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov)

**WASHINGTON** — The Department of the Interior today announced the availability of \$775 million for 21 states to clean up legacy pollution through President Biden’s Investing in America agenda. These historic resources to clean up orphaned oil and gas wells and well sites - of which over \$1 billion has already been distributed – are creating good-paying jobs, catalyzing economic growth, eliminating harmful methane leaks, and reducing environmental and public health risks to surface water and groundwater resources critical to U.S. communities and ecosystems.

Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Department is delivering the largest investment in [tackling legacy pollution](#) in American history, including \$4.7 billion to plug orphaned wells. This includes grants to states in three categories: initial grants, formula grants, and performance grants.

[Plugging is underway](#) across the country, and since the enactment of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, states have plugged more than 8,200 orphaned wells. Nationwide, investments through the Department’s Orphaned Well Program Office are estimated to have supported over 7,200 jobs and contributed more than \$900 million to the economy over the last two fiscal years.

# **New Federal Administration**

July 2025:

- Interior Department Revises Guidelines to Speed Up Plugging of Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells, [press release](#)
- FAQ Sheet on 2025 Changes, [PDF link](#)
- PA reached out to DOC to discuss effects of this on current and future Federal allocations for Orphan Wells

# Interior Department Revises Guidelines to Speed Up Plugging of Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells

Share

07/17/2025  
Last edited 07/17/2025

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**WASHINGTON** – The Department of the Interior has updated its guidelines for states applying to federal programs aimed at cleaning up abandoned oil and gas wells. The revised guidance updates two federal grant programs, the \$780 million Orphaned Wells State Matching Grant Program and the \$1.93 billion Orphaned Wells State Formula Grant Program. The changes are meant to cut red tape and help states act faster.

The revised guidance eliminates non-statutory requirements and reduces burdens on State grant recipients. This includes:

- Removing the requirement that States conduct pre- and post-plugging methane measurement.
- Recognizing the discretion States have in identifying and plugging orphaned wells.
- Eliminating the Department’s unnecessary post-award, environmental review and approval process.

“States know their land and their needs best,” said **Acting Assistant Secretary of Policy, Management and Budget Tyler Hassen**. “By cutting unnecessary barriers, we’re helping them clean up old wells faster, protect communities and support energy development.”

FAQ Sheet on 2025 Changes, [PDF link](#):

- **Q4: How much Matching Grant funding is available?**
- Each State fiscal year, eligible States may apply for and receive a Matching Grant from the Department equal to what the State commits to spend in that fiscal year if the amount is greater than the average spent by the state between State fiscal years 2010 and 2019. Each State may apply for and receive **only one Matching Grant per State fiscal year but may receive multiple Matching Grants over the duration of the program provided that the total awarded funding does not exceed \$30 million per State**. By incentivizing grant recipients to increase funding for their State orphaned well programs, these grants help accelerate well plugging activities and support the Department's efforts to unleash American energy.

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## FAQ Sheet on 2025 Changes, [PDF link:](#)

- **Q5: What if a State applied for a grant under the previous guidance?**
- **The Department will incorporate the Revised State Matching Grant Guidance into all new Matching Grant awards.** States that timely submitted a Matching Grant application prior to the issuance of the revised guidance may revise their applications, including Budget Proposals and Workplans. However, States are not required to submit new applications. While the Department will contact applicants to discuss any necessary revisions prior to award, States are encouraged to submit revised application materials as soon as possible. Timely submission of updated budget proposals and workplans will ensure that the Department is able to award grants as expeditiously as possible.

FAQ Sheet on 2025 Changes, [PDF link:](#)

- **Q6: Does the revised Guidance apply to existing Matching Grants?**
- The Guidance **applies to existing awards**. States are encouraged to submit revised materials requesting amendments to the terms and conditions of their Notices of Award as soon as possible. Timely submission of revised materials will help ensure that the Department is able to amend the Notice of Award to incorporate the revised Guidance as expeditiously as possible. The Department will contact States to discuss any revisions prior to amending the Notice of Award for existing Matching Grants. Unless otherwise indicated by the Financial Assistance Officer, grant recipients must comply with the existing terms and conditions of award until the Notice of Award is updated.

FAQ Sheet on 2025 Changes, [PDF link](#):

- **Q7: Why did the Department remove the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act requirements?**
- Based on the authorizing statute, the Department determined that activities funded by Matching Grants are not subject to the Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, nor are they “undertakings” subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The revised guidance removes those requirements. Eliminating the non-statutory requirement for a burdensome process created by the previous Administration reflects Secretary Burgum’s priority to de-regulate and cut red tape, thus reducing the post-award burden on grant recipients, accelerating well plugging activities, and supporting the Department’s efforts to unleash American energy.

## October 2025 (from DOC):

- The new Federal Guidance has made the process for starting well abandonments **easier**. Instead of having to submit detailed, lengthy reports to the U.S. Dept. of Interior for project approval, the program now is required to follow state regulations. So, **we are continuing to perform CEQA reviews, conduct endangered species surveys, and do thorough cultural review for the various sites**. However, we no longer need U.S. Department of Interior approval to proceed.
- At this point, the **funding eligibility** for the Formula and Matching Federal Grants **has not changed**. Since the U.S. Department of Interior has changed its guidance, the application process had to be modified to accommodate the changes. We had to modify both our recent Formula Grant application and Matching Grant application to reflect the new guidance. There was another grant, the Regulatory Improvement Grant (RIG), that was pulled for further review before any state had been able to apply.

## October 2025 (from DOC):

- As for the current Federal Government shutdown, we are still determining its impact on the State Abandonment program. We will let you know if there are any updates on what is going to happen, if anything, to the program.
- Going forward after State Abandonment Phase 2, deserted wells with finalized Plug and Abandon (P&A) Orders will be added to our State Abandonment list on an ongoing basis. Having a “running” list instead of a static “phased” approach **gives us more flexibility** to use our existing well screening methodology to more quickly address wells that are leaking or of concern. **Currently there are 8 deserted wells in the Los Angeles City Oil Field that have final P&A Orders including the Temple Resources well that are under current discussion for prioritization.** If the wells are accessible, and as funding remains available, we will continue down the prioritized list.

**Questions?**

## Contact Information

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