

Communication from Public

Name: Rosalie Preston

Date Submitted: 08/26/2026 10:19 AM

Council File No: 24-0919

Comments for Public Posting: I strongly urge that the Public Safety Committee require that LAFD use their existing authority to issue notices to oil operators to either plug and abandon or reactivate idle wells. There are over 1,200 idle wells in the City of LA, with eight located in and near the Athens on the Hill neighborhood of the northern section of Harbor Gateway. These unplugged wells could be leaking methane, benzene, and other toxic chemicals polluting our air, soil, and groundwater. They are also a financial risk to the taxpayers of LA city; it can cost up to \$500,000 to plug a well. If left unplugged, these wells risk becoming a state liability that California taxpayers will have to pay for. The Los Angeles Fire Department already has the authority to require that oil operators plug these idle wells after one year of inactivity, but LAFD is not taking the necessary action. This inaction by LAFD is causing significant risks to health and safety for frontline communities, and financial risk to taxpayers. I urge the Committee to go beyond the recommendations in the City Attorney report and require that LAFD use their existing authority to plug idle wells.

Communication from Public

Name: STAND-LA Coalition

Date Submitted: 08/26/2026 09:11 AM

Council File No: 24-0919

Comments for Public Posting: Dear LA City Public Safety Committee Members, The STAND-LA Coalition (Stand Together Against Neighborhood Drilling - Los Angeles) is writing to urge the Committee to require that the Los Angeles Fire Department utilize their existing authority to plug idle wells in the City of LA. Our organizations represent frontline communities in South Los Angeles and Wilmington that have been fighting for over a decade to halt the toxic extraction of oil in our neighborhoods. The City of Los Angeles has over 1,200 idle wells that are not actively producing, but are unplugged. Many of these wells are located close to sensitive receptors such as homes, schools, and playgrounds. There are almost 1,000 idle wells within 3,200 feet of a K-12 school, and over 1,000 idle wells within 3,200 feet of a healthcare facility in LA City. Idle wells are at risk of leaks and explosions, posing a significant health and safety threat to residents. These wells can release toxic pollutants into the air and leach contaminants into the groundwater and soil. Numerous studies have recorded leaks of benzene and methane from idle wells. Benzene is a known human carcinogen associated with increased risks of neurological, respiratory and reproductive impacts, and other serious health effects. Methane has more than 80 times the heat-trapping potential of carbon dioxide over a 20-year period, making even relatively small leaks a significant contributor to climate change. One study of idle wells in California found that approximately two-thirds of the idle wells sampled were leaking methane, meaning that over 800 idle wells in LA City could be leaking. Because many idle wells remain unplugged for years or decades, these emissions can continue unabated unless the wells are properly plugged and safely remediated. It is of critical importance that the City address these idle wells now while their operator is still active, instead of allowing them to remain unplugged for many years which risks the wells becoming orphaned. Once a well is orphaned, it becomes the State's responsibility to ensure it is plugged and abandoned. This often leaves the burden of covering the high costs of plugging these wells to taxpayers. If LA's 1,200 idle wells were to become orphaned, it could cost taxpayers upwards of \$550 million dollars to plug these wells. The Los Angeles Fire Department has an existing authority in the Municipal Code (Section 57.5706.3.16.1)

to require that oil wells be plugged or reactivated after one year of no production. “Any oil well which has not been secured in compliance with the provisions of Section 57.5706.3.15, or which, for a continuous period of one 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.” However, the Fire Department has not been utilizing this authority to send notices to oil operators after their wells have been idle for at least one year. Their reliance on the State’s Idle Well Management Plan system is allowing idle wells in LA City to persist unplugged for many years when the City has a more health protective requirement already in place. The Fire Department has the ability to protect the health and safety of frontline residents, but is choosing to not use this authority. We urge the Committee to require the Fire Department to issue notices to oil operators to either plug and abandon or reactivate idle wells throughout LA City. The report from the City Attorney’s office clearly states: “The LAMC currently provides LAFD with the discretionary authority to order wells that are idle for longer than one year, to be plugged and abandoned.” While the third recommendation of the report begins to address this authority, it does not go far enough in requiring that LAFD use their existing authority. STAND-LA advocates for a motion from the Committee to require that LAFD use their authority to order idle wells to be reactivated or plugged after 12 months. Sincerely,

Emma Silber, Co-Coordinator, STAND-LA Coalition
Maro Kakoussian, Director of Climate and Health Programs
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles, Co-Chair of STAND-LA
Wendy Miranda, Policy Director
Esperanza Community Housing
Richard Parks, President
Redeemer Community Partnership
Reverend Louis Chase, Minister of Community Outreach
Holman United Methodist Church
Roberto Cabrales, Southern California Program Co-Director
Communities for a Better Environment, Co-Chair of STAND-LA
Tanya Borja, Environmental Justice Policy Associate
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)

August 26th, 2026
LA City Public Safety Committee
200 N Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear LA City Public Safety Committee Members,

The STAND-LA Coalition (Stand Together Against Neighborhood Drilling - Los Angeles) is writing to urge the Committee to require that the Los Angeles Fire Department utilize their existing authority to plug idle wells in the City of LA. Our organizations represent frontline communities in South Los Angeles and Wilmington that have been fighting for over a decade to halt the toxic extraction of oil in our neighborhoods.

The City of Los Angeles has over 1,200 idle wells that are not actively producing, but are unplugged.¹ Many of these wells are located close to sensitive receptors such as homes, schools, and playgrounds. There are almost 1,000 idle wells within 3,200 feet of a K-12 school, and over 1,000 idle wells within 3,200 feet of a healthcare facility in LA City.²

Idle wells are at risk of leaks and explosions, posing a significant health and safety threat to residents. These wells can release toxic pollutants into the air and leach contaminants into the groundwater and soil. Numerous studies have recorded leaks of benzene and methane from idle wells. Benzene is a known human carcinogen associated with increased risks of neurological, respiratory and reproductive impacts, and other serious health effects.³ Methane has more than 80 times the heat-trapping potential of carbon dioxide over a 20-year period, making even relatively small leaks a significant contributor to climate change. One study of idle wells in California found that approximately two-thirds of the idle wells sampled were leaking methane, meaning that over 800 idle wells in LA City could be leaking.⁴ Because many idle wells remain unplugged for years or decades, these emissions can continue unabated unless the wells are properly plugged and safely remediated.

It is of critical importance that the City address these idle wells now while their operator is still active, instead of allowing them to remain unplugged for many years which risks the wells

¹ [LA City Oil and Gas Wells Dashboard](#)

² [LA City analysis of idle wells and proximity to sensitive receptors, Center for Biological Diversity at the request of STAND-LA](#)

³ [Sierra Club Idle Well Report](#)

⁴ [Methane Emissions from Abandoned Oil and Gas Wells in California](#)

becoming orphaned. Once a well is orphaned, it becomes the State's responsibility to ensure it is plugged and abandoned. This often leaves the burden of covering the high costs of plugging these wells to taxpayers. If LA's 1,200 idle wells were to become orphaned, it could cost taxpayers upwards of \$550 million dollars to plug these wells.⁵

The Los Angeles Fire Department has an existing authority in the Municipal Code (Section 57.5706.3.16.1) to require that oil wells be plugged or reactivated after one year of no production.

"Any oil well which has not been secured in compliance with the provisions of Section 57.5706.3.15, or which, for a continuous period of one 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."⁶

However, the Fire Department has not been utilizing this authority to send notices to oil operators after their wells have been idle for at least one year. Their reliance on the State's Idle Well Management Plan system is allowing idle wells in LA City to persist unplugged for many years when the City has a more health protective requirement already in place. The Fire Department has the ability to protect the health and safety of frontline residents, but is choosing to not use this authority.

We urge the Committee to require the Fire Department to issue notices to oil operators to either plug and abandon or reactivate idle wells throughout LA City. The report from the City Attorney's office clearly states: "The LAMC currently provides LAFD with the discretionary authority to order wells that are idle for longer than one year, to be plugged and abandoned."⁷ While the third recommendation of the report begins to address this authority, it does not go far enough in requiring that LAFD use their existing authority. STAND-LA advocates for a motion from the Committee to require that LAFD use their authority to order idle wells to be reactivated or plugged after 12 months.

Sincerely,

Emma Silber, Co-Coordinator, STAND-LA Coalition

Maro Kakoussian, Director of Climate and Health Programs
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles, Co-Chair of STAND-LA

Wendy Miranda, Policy Director
Esperanza Community Housing

Richard Parks, President
Redeemer Community Partnership

⁵ [Sierra Club Idle Well Report](#)

⁶ [SEC. 57.5706.3.16.1. NON-OPERATING OIL WELLS.](#)

⁷ [City Attorney Report on Council File 24-0919](#)

Reverend Louis Chase, Minister of Community Outreach
Holman United Methodist Church

Roberto Cabrales, Southern California Program Co-Director
Communities for a Better Environment, Co-Chair of STAND-LA

Tanya Borja, Environmental Justice Policy Associate
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education (SCOPE)

Communication from Public

Name: Catherine Ronan

Date Submitted: 08/25/2026 03:01 PM

Council File No: 24-0919

Comments for Public Posting: Idle wells which are no longer producing oil but have not been plugged are a real problem here in LA. Did you know that an estimated 66% of oil wells leak methane (aka natural gas)? Methane is a causal factor for health conditions such as asthma; it also contributes to air pollution which is very disturbing considering how polluted LA already is. The Los Angeles Fire Department currently has the authority (according to the City Attorney's opinion letter) to require oil wells idle more than 12 months to be plugged. Let's make sure they take advantage of this authority and require oil operators in LA to plug their idle wells. Current state law requires a certain percentage to be plugged each year but it's minimal. We need to do better. CalGEM has all the information already in their database on the location and status of all the oil wells in LA. Please act now.

Communication from Public

Name: Christina

Date Submitted: 08/25/2026 10:29 PM

Council File No: 24-0919

Comments for Public Posting: Hello, my name is Christina_ and I am writing to urge the Public Safety Committee to require that LAFD use their existing authority to issue notices to oil operators to either plug and abandon or reactivate idle wells. There are over 1,200 idle wells in the City of LA. These unplugged wells could be leaking methane, benzene, and other toxic chemicals polluting our air, soil, and groundwater. They are also a financial risk to the taxpayers of LA city; it can cost up to 500,000 dollars to plug a well. If left unplugged, these wells risk becoming a state liability that California taxpayers will have to pay for. The Los Angeles Fire Department already has the authority to require that oil operators plug these idle wells after one year of inactivity, but LAFD is choosing to allow these wells to stay unplugged. This inaction by LAFD is causing significant risks to health and safety for frontline communities, and financial risk to taxpayers. I urge the Committee to go beyond the recommendations in the City Attorney report and require that LAFD use their existing authority to plug idle wells. Thank you. Thanks! Christina