



**Geologic Energy Management Division**

# **Idle Well Program Legislative Report**

**An Overview of Idle and Orphaned Wells in California**

**Reporting Period: January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024**

Prepared Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 3206.3

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) provides this annual report to satisfy the requirements of Public Resources Code (PRC) section 3206.3. The reporting period addressed in this report is for January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2024.

### Idle and Long-Term Idle Wells in California

- 31,899 wells met the definition of idle well
  - 15,733 of those wells met the definition of long-term idle well (LTIW)
    - 1,863 LTIWs were eliminated
    - 1,605 LTIWs were plugged and abandoned
    - 258 LTIWs were returned to use
    - 1,219 LTIWs were eliminated from Idle Well Management Plans (IWMPs) including 149 applied credits
  - 3,520 idle wells were plugged and abandoned
  - 935 idle wells changed from idle to active
  - 2,345 wells changed from active to idle
  - 60 idle wells were classified as “inaccessible”
- 67 IWMPs were approved
  - 60 operators were compliant with the terms of their approved IWMP
  - Two operators voluntarily cancelled their 2024 IWMP and paid a cumulative \$33,000 in annual idle well fees
  - Five IWMPs were cancelled due to the operator’s failure to comply with their 2024 IWMP. Of these operators: 1) three owe a cumulative \$246,150 in fees; 2) one has timely paid \$81,300 in fees; and 3) fees remain outstanding for the final operator pending resolution of the operator’s appeal of the cancellation of their IWMP

### Orphan Wells

- 47 wells are currently declared orphan with 673 wells as potentially orphan
- 3,476 identified idle-deserted wells as of December 31, 2024
- The average plug and abandonment cost (including well site remediation) per well for Northern District: \$142,473; Central District: \$102,208; and Southern District: \$258,719
- October 2024, CalGEM released its State Oil and Gas Well Abandonment Expenditure Plan and Annual Program Update with the Phase 2 list of potentially orphan wells to be abandoned

### Fees, Collections, and Liens

- \$1,017,488.63 in idle well fees were collected from 140 operators
- Idle well fees collected are deposited into the Hazardous and Idle-Deserted Well Abatement Fund (HIDWAF)
- As of December 31, 2024, the balance of the HIDWAF is \$15,614,057.15



## IDLE AND LONG-TERM IDLE WELLS IN CALIFORNIA

### 1.1 Idle and Long-Term Idle Wells in 2024

#### Idle Well Count Totals by Year

| CALENDAR YEAR | IDLE WELLS | LONG-TERM IDLE WELLS (LTIW) | IDLE WELLS CHANGED TO P&A | IDLE WELLS CHANGED TO ACTIVE | IWMP WELLS ELIMINATED |
|---------------|------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>2019</b>   | 37,095     | 17,560                      | 1,927                     | 690                          | 543                   |
| <b>2020</b>   | 37,612     | 17,786                      | 2,154                     | 532                          | 558                   |
| <b>2021</b>   | 38,759     | 17,888                      | 2,703                     | 568                          | 464                   |
| <b>2022</b>   | 38,794     | 17,595                      | 3,508                     | 1,520                        | 447                   |
| <b>2023</b>   | 35,057     | 16,955                      | 4,091                     | 1,316                        | 739                   |
| <b>2024</b>   | 31,899     | 15,733                      | 3,520                     | 935                          | 1,219                 |

See **Appendix 1.1** for a complete list of idle wells that met the definition of idle well and LTIW by American Petroleum Institute (API) identification number in 2024. The list also identifies the following:

- Operator, field, and pool
- Idle wells changed from idle to LTIW
- Idle wells status changed from idle to active
- Idle wells status changed from idle to plugged and abandoned

### 1.2 Idle Well Management Plan Statuses and Compliance

In this reporting period, CalGEM received 67 IWMPs. Based on the terms of the approved IWMPs, operators were expected to eliminate a minimum of 631 LTIWs.

- The annual review of all approved 2024 IWMPs yielded the following results:
  - 60 operators were found to be compliant with the terms of their approved IWMPs.
  - Two operators voluntarily cancelled their 2024 IWMP and paid a cumulative \$33,000 in annual fees prior to the close of the year.
  - Three operators' IWMPs were cancelled without a timely appeal for failure to



- comply and owed a cumulative \$246,150 in annual idle well fees immediately.
- One operator's IWMP was cancelled without appeal for failure to comply and the operator paid \$81,300 in annual idle well fees in a timely manner.
- One operator submitted a timely appeal to CalGEM's cancellation of their IWMP. The operator will owe \$7,800 in annual idle well fees if the Department upholds the cancellation at hearing.

See **Appendix 1.2** for the list of operators with 2024 IWMPs and the statuses of those IWMPs.

### 1.3 Production Facility Violations Attendant to Long-Term Idle Wells

For the purpose of this report, a production facility attendant to a LTIW includes any setting, tank, vessel, sump, or pipeline. While the statutory definition of production facility found in Public Resources Code section 3010 includes a wellhead as a type of production facility, the operational definition used in this report omits violations observed directly related to the wellhead, as those violations are associated with the well.

| FACILITY TYPE | VIOLATIONS<br>ISSUED IN 2024 | VIOLATIONS<br>ISSUED THEN<br>RESOLVED IN<br>2024 | TOTAL<br>VIOLATIONS<br>(2019-2024)<br>RESOLVED IN<br>2024 | ACTIVE<br>VIOLATIONS<br>(2019-2024) |
|---------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Pipeline      | 0                            | 0                                                | 1                                                         | 8                                   |
| Sump          | 6                            | 1                                                | 3                                                         | 12                                  |
| Setting Only  | 28                           | 16                                               | 61                                                        | 80                                  |
| Tank          | 28                           | 19                                               | 97                                                        | 142                                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | 62                           | 36                                               | 162                                                       | 242                                 |

See **Appendix 1.3** for the list of violations issued for production facilities attendant to LTIWs.

### 1.4 Inaccessible Idle Wells

CalGEM reviewed and approved 60 idle well demonstrations that it is infeasible to physically access the well, in accordance with California Code of Regulations, title 14, (CCR) section 1772.1, subdivision (d), the operator is not required to meet the testing and analytical requirements of CCR sections 1772.1, 1772.1.1, and 1772.1.2. In 2024, one (1) classified inaccessible idle well became accessible and was plugged and abandoned.



See **Appendix 1.1** for the list of 60 wells that have been approved as inaccessible.

For more information about the Idle Well Program, visit the program webpage:  
[https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/idle\\_well](https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/idle_well)



## ORPHAN WELLS

### 2.1 Orphan Wells

In accordance with PRC section 3206.3, subdivision (a)(1)(C), see **Appendix 2.1** for the list of wells declared orphan or found to potentially be orphan, and costs associated with the abandonment and decommissioning of those wells.

### 2.2 Estimated Costs of Decommissioning Orphan/Potentially Orphan Wells

The costs to CalGEM of plugging and abandoning orphan wells range from \$11/foot in a rural oilfield with no wellbore damage to \$200/foot in an urbanized area with ancillary costs.

CalGEM has calculated the average plug and abandonment cost (including well site remediation) for Northern District as \$142,473 per well, Central District as \$102,208 per well, and Southern District as \$258,719 per well.

See **Appendix 2.1** for the list of 673 potentially orphan or 47 declared orphan wells, and costs associated with the abandonment and decommissioning of those wells.

Note that the number of wells determined to be potentially orphan or declared orphan is not the full number of idle deserted wells within the State. "Idle-deserted well" means an oil and gas well determined by the supervisor to be deserted under PRC section 3237 and for which there is no operator responsible for its plugging and abandonment, PRC section 3251, subdivision (e). As of December 31, 2024, 3,476 wells were identified as idle-deserted wells. More information on deserted wells can be found in CalGEM's Hazardous and Idle-Deserted Well 2024 Legislative Report.

### 2.3 Timeline of Orphan Well Abandonments with Schedule of Goals

In 2024, CalGEM completed the plugging and abandonment of 171 wells formerly operated by HVI Cat Canyon, Inc. in the Santa Maria area. CalGEM also plugged and abandoned 25 high-risk wells located near homes, offices, and parks in the city of Bakersfield operated by Griffin Resources, LLC. In December 2024, CalGEM began work to plug and abandon 19 wells at the AllenCo site in downtown Los Angeles.

In October 2024, CalGEM released its State Oil and Gas Well Abandonment Expenditure Plan and Annual Program Update with the Phase 2 list of orphan wells CalGEM will likely permanently plug and abandon using state and federal funds, including the abandonment of wells near the cities of Arvin and Oxnard in 2025.

More information on CalGEM's state abandonment program can be found here:



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

## FEES, COLLECTIONS, AND LIENS

### 3.1 Operators Delinquent on Paying Fees or Filing an IWMP

See **Appendix 3.1** for the list of 3,727 wells that have been idle for three years or more in the Calendar Year and the responsible operator neither paid fees, nor filed an IWMP, nor complied with the terms of their approved IWMP.

### 3.2 Amounts Collected and Costs Recovered

CalGEM's Collections Unit pursues recovery of outstanding charges owed by operators for wells they operate or operated in the past that are subject to a final plugging and abandonment order based on CalGEM's determination the well was deserted. Evidence of desertion is described in Public Resources Code sections 3206, 3206.1.1 and 3237, and includes such evidence as failure to pay idle well fees, failure to comply with idle well regulations, and conditions at the well site.

The Collections Unit initiates recovery actions against responsible parties by sending notice of outstanding charges, making claims on bonds, and utilizing asset identification tools and working in partnership with the State Controller's Office to record tax liens on the responsible party's assets. In calendar year 2024, CalGEM recovered a total of \$1,136,832.66 from operators or responsible parties for plugging and abandonment work ordered or completed by CalGEM. This includes one direct operator payment of \$312,352.00 and nine bond claims, across seven operators, totaling \$874,480.90.

CalGEM has engaged a third-party collections contractor to assist with pursuing recovery of delinquent charges. Under this initiative, 147 operators with a combined debt of \$952,650 were referred to the contractor. As of this report, collections totaling \$4,923.33 have been recovered from four of these operators.

CalGEM collected \$1,017,488.63 in idle well fees including penalties and interest from 140 operators. Idle well fees collected are deposited into the HIDWAF. As of December 31, 2024, the balance of the HIDWAF is \$15,614,057.15.

See **Appendix 3.2** for the individual idle well fees collected from operators in 2024.

### 3.3 Liens

While CalGEM does not currently have liens on file, CalGEM is working in coordination with the State Controller's Office to put liens in place when appropriate assets are found.



## APPENDIX

### 1.1 2024 Calendar Year Idle Well Inventory

List of all wells that met the definition of an idle well at any point in the 2024 reporting period. The list includes the API number, well designation, operator code, operator name, field, county, pool(s), idle start date, idle end date, status as of January 1, 2025, LTIW status identified, became LTIW in 2024, and identifying inaccessible idle wells.

### 1.2 Operators with 2024 IWMPs & Current Status

List of all operators with IWMPs submitted in 2024. The list includes operator name, operator code, the status of each IWMP as of the annual review, the minimum number of LTIWs required to be eliminated, the number of LTIWs eliminated through plugging and abandonment (P&A) or return to use (RTU), credits applied, and credits earned for LTIWs eliminated in excess of the minimum requirement.

### 1.3 Production Facility Violations Attendant to Long-Term Idle Wells

List of violations issued to operators in 2024 for violations at production facilities attendant to LTIWs including: settings, tanks, vessels, sumps, and pipelines. This list includes the violation identification number (ID), compliance ID, operator code, operator name, facility type, observation date, remedy due date, resolved date (if violation remediated), district, section of the PRC or California Code of Regulations (CCR) violated, and violation statuses as of May 1, 2025.

### 2.1 Idle Wells Potentially Orphan or Declared Orphan

List of all idle wells that are potentially orphan or have been declared to be orphaned. The list includes the API number, well designation, current status, classification, date declared orphan, LTIW status, last known operator name and code, field, county, district, order number, order type, estimated cost to plug and abandon the well, and P&A timeline phase.

### 3.1 Idle Wells with Operators Delinquent on Paying Fees or Filing an IWMP

A list of wells idle for three years or more in calendar year 2024 and the responsible operator neither paid the require idle well fee nor filed and complied with an IWMP. The list includes the API number, well designation, operator code, operator name, field, county, district, status, LTIW status, if it became a LTIW in 2024, and classification.

### 3.2 Fees Collected in 2024

A list of individual idle well fees collected from operators in 2024. The list includes operator



name, operator code, amount due on May 1, 2024, amounts collected in 2024, current balance due, if the well was on an approved IWMP for 2024, and if the operator was sent to collections.



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### **Websites and Links**

For more information about California Geologic Energy Management Division, visit the division's webpage: <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem>

For questions regarding the content of this report, contact the CalGEM Public Transparency Office at [CalGEMPublicTransparencyOffice@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:CalGEMPublicTransparencyOffice@conservation.ca.gov)

For more information about the Idle Well Program, visit the program webpage: [https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/idle\\_well](https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/idle_well)

For more information about the Cost Estimate Regulations for Oil and Gas Operations and the Operator Financial Responsibility (OFR) program, visit the program webpage at: <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/Operator-Financial-Responsibility-Program.aspx>

More information on CalGEM's oil and gas well state abandonment program can be found here: <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/Pages/State-Abandonments.aspx>



**District Offices**

**Headquarters**

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**Northern District**

**Sacramento Office**

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**Orcutt Office**

195 S. Broadway, Suite 101  
Orcutt, CA 93455  
(805) 937-7246 | Fax: (805) 937-0673

**Ventura Office**

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Ventura, CA 93003  
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**Central District**

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**Southern District**

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