

MOTION

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

On October 7, 2023, Governor Newsom signed into law AB 1167 (Carrillo), the Orphan Well Prevention Act, which seeks to protect Californians by requiring anyone acquiring the rights to operate a well or production facility to file a bond commensurate with the full costs of plugging, abandonment and site restoration of the well once operation ceases. The California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) of the California Department of Conservation estimates that there are already more than 5,300 idle wells across the state that are likely “orphaned” without a solvent operator to properly plug and abandon them, including approximately 1,400 across Los Angeles County.

The Fire Department (LAFD) administers and operates the Oil Well Inspection Program (Program), which is charged with fire and life safety inspections of all oil wells throughout the City and maintains records of over 3,500 oil wells dating back to the 1930s. Under the Program, LAFD works with the City Administrative Officer (CAO) and Office of Finance (Finance) to ensure that every active well has an active bond or cash deposit on file with the City. Additionally, the Program requires oil well owners, before proceeding with an abandonment of any well, to obtain a Specific Action Permit for Abandonment from LAFD and a separate bond through CAO and Finance for completing the required work for plugging the oil well.

It is imperative that the City’s Oil Well Inspection Program and associated ordinances be updated, if necessary, to be consistent with the state’s Orphan Well Prevention Act, as well as for the City to begin compiling a list of oil wells across the City that are likely “orphaned” without a solvent operator to properly plug and abandon them so that the City can begin to develop a plan to address them.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Fire Department be instructed, with assistance from the City Attorney, Office of Finance, and City Administrative Office, to report to Council with recommendations on updates to the City’s Oil Well Inspection Program necessitated by the state’s Orphan Well Prevention Act including relevant ordinance changes, as well as provide a list of oil wells across the City that are likely “orphaned” without a solvent operator to properly plug and abandon them with recommended next steps for developing a plan to address them.

PRESENTED BY:


BOB BLUMENFIELD
Councilmember, 3rd District

SECONDED BY:



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