



COUNTY of VENTURA

June 6, 2022

The Honorable Monique Limón
Member of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 7330
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1295 (Limón) – Oil and gas: hazardous or deserted wells and facilities
(As amended 5/19/2022) – SUPPORT
Awaiting hearing – Assembly Committee on Natural Resources**

Dear Senator Limón:

On behalf of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, I write in support of SB 1295, your measure that would enact a variety of changes to facilitate the plugging and safe decommissioning of idle and abandoned wells.

An idle well is defined as a well that has been out of use for two years or more and has yet to be properly sealed and closed. Permanently plugging idle wells isolates potential contaminants and mitigates associated public health and environmental hazards. It is estimated that there are more than 2,000 idle and abandoned wells within the County. The Board of Supervisors has clear policy supporting legislative efforts that (1) develop a clear plan, timeline, and funding mechanism to adequately assure the reclamation of all oil sites and infrastructure and (2) set a finite time limit on the maintenance of oil wells in idle status.

Ventura County supports, in particular, the provisions in Section 3 of SB 1295 that would amend the Public Resources Code related to the California Geologic Energy Management Division's (CalGEM) expenditure authority. Specifically, your measure would update the reference for future fiscal years – beginning in 2022-23 – to "\$5 million and, in addition, an amount equal to the total amount appropriated from the General Fund for the preceding fiscal year for the purposes of plugging and abandoning wells, decommissioning facilities, and site remediation pursuant to this article."

SB 1295 recognizes the considerable and much-needed investment proposed in the Governor's 2022-23 budget. By authorizing an increase in the annual expenditure limit from the Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Administrative Fund (OGGAF) for the plugging and abandonment of hazardous or idle-deserted oil or gas wells to include the amount appropriated from the General Fund for the same purpose in the preceding fiscal year, this bill clearly aligns with the Board's policy and vision for prioritizing the sealing of idle wells. Your measure would facilitate continued

investment of resources needed to address deserted wells and mitigate associated public health and environmental risks. The risk of leaks and resulting contamination are too great a threat to leave unaddressed, and we believe SB 1295 places a continued priority on delivering a comprehensive, long-term solution to this problem.

The County appreciates your efforts to promote proper remediation of idle gas and oil wells and reducing the potential for environmental risks. For these reasons, the County of Ventura is pleased to support SB 1295. If there are questions about the County's position, I can be reached at ehe@hbeadvocacy.com or 916-272-0012. Thank you for your leadership on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Espinosa
Legislative Advocate

Cc: The Honorable Luz M. Rivas, Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Members and Consultants, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Ventura County Delegation