

WVDEP
Office of Oil and Gas Program Review
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Abandoned Wells



west virginia department of environmental protection
Promoting a Healthy Environment

Abandoned wells are defined in WV Code Chapter 22, Article 6 as wells that are “not in use” and are required to be plugged unless a future use is demonstrated.



There are approximately 12,000 (post-29) abandoned oil and gas wells in WV. Around 4500 of these are considered “orphaned”.



Of all known abandoned wells, approximately 4,521 are listed as operator unknown. About 35% of the abandoned wells OOG has on record.

Approximately 5,694 abandoned wells are currently registered to known operators that do not have an abandoned well initiative compliance agreement—approximately 45% of the abandoned wells OOG has on record.



In 2003 the OOG developed the Abandoned Well Initiative to help address the abandoned well issue. The program was created to give operators with multiple abandoned wells a chance to bring their wells into compliance. Approximately 100 operators are participating- representing about 2500 wells.



Major Abandoned Well Initiative Requirements

Must provide a list / exhibit of those oil and gas wells to be part of the Consent Agreement.

Agreement is for a ten year period from 2003 to December 31 2012.

Operator must address at least 10% of the wells on their list / Exhibit each year through plugging, putting back into production, or transfer to another operator with OOG approval.

Cannot apply for Bona Fide Future Use for these wells.

By January 31 of each year the operator must provide a report of those wells they addressed the previous year and those wells to be addressed in the current calendar year.



The OOG is considering what options may be effective in returning abandoned wells to compliance through production or plugging.



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