

Community Benefits Committee (CBC) Meeting | Oct. 15, 2024

Website:

<https://dep.wv.gov/oil-and-gas/abandoned-well-plugging/inflation-reduction-act/community-benefits-plan/Pages/default.aspx>

Attendees:

Charles Burd, Gas & Oil Association of West Virginia
Autumn Crowe, West Virginia Rivers Coalition
Tom Huber, West Virginia Royalty Owners Association
David McMahon, Surface Owners Rights Organization
Justin Williams, Affiliated Construction Trades
Jason Harmon*, Deputy Chief, Office of Oil & Gas, WV Dept. of Environmental Protection (WVDEP)

Observers:

Alana Hartman Asst. Chief, Office of Oil & Gas, WVDEP (notetaker)
Fred Hill, WVDEP Division of Air Quality
Laura Jennings, WVDEP Division of Air Quality
Chris Cadez, U.S. Dept. of Energy

*CBC chairperson

Notes

- Agenda was approved (TH moved, DM seconded)
- September Meeting minutes were approved (JW moved, DM seconded)

Reports: Chair

- Public Meetings - locations chosen generally reflect the scheme we discussed during previous meeting, providing options for southern, northern, and high-concentration/Ritchie county areas:
 - Nov 7, 6-8 pm – DEP HQ (virtual option as well)
 - Nov 13, 6-8 pm – Fairmont, WV (Kingmont Community Building)
 - Nov 14, 6-8 pm – North Bend State park
 - Format will include introduction of the grant program by JH, then probably an opportunity to meet at tables for more one-on-one discussions, if enough people are present for that to make sense. Not a standard public meeting, since there is no permit or rules in question. A few surface owners may attend in addition to mineral owners and industry. We could consider presenting draft factors/model, including inviting them to consider “sensitive receptors” such as schools. Jason has a meeting scheduled with Dorinda Byers to discuss topics related to workforce development
 - **JH will inquire about an email address to which people can submit electronic comments.**
- Methane Emissions Reduction Program (MERP) grant timeline, specifically **the 11/15 deadline for the well prioritization plan**, is not as flexible as we had thought. DEP has drafted the RFP (Request for Proposals) for the Administrator; **JH will share the RFP when it is published.** However, an Administrator will not be engaged in time for this deadline.
 - JH asked, and there was agreement, that the CBC can help to develop the prioritization plan at our next meeting, because we will have in-hand the feedback from the public meetings. DM emailed the group a list of factors to consider using. Prioritization normally

used for plugging *abandoned* wells with WV state funding would not apply. MERP grant guidance says we have to prioritize with respect to proximity to disadvantaged communities; not as well-defined as simply “methane reductions.” It is not clear whether the number of wells under consent order should be considered.

- The plugging contracts will likely consist of groups/packages. There is support for this among CBC members, because of the efficiencies of geographical proximity. The US Dept. of Energy/NETL’s PRIMO tool could be useful - allows user to enter weights for factors and define idea groupings of wells within X miles, etc. (*See fact sheet about PRIMO copied at the end of these meeting notes*) **JH will share a presentation about PRIMO where it was tested in PA.** Some factors, like distance from a school, would have to be analyzed with GIS separately, then entered into PRIMO tool.
- This program is entirely voluntary; operators cannot be forced to nominate a well. The Administrator, once engaged, will lead the nomination process, obtaining information from the operators. If landowners flag wells, those would have to be incorporated into the process as well.
- Methane Emissions Quantification (MEQ) will have to be performed on each well.
- DEP learned recently that we received the 2023 tax year funding for state well plugging program, which was \$9 million, so current balance is \$15 million; JH is looking into developing some contracts for every abandoned well in a county.

Old Business - covered during “Reports,” above

New Business -

- a. Public meeting invitees - see brainstormed list from September meeting, plus:
 - i. Legislative representatives
 - ii. County Commissions
 - iii. Constituencies represented by CBC members
 - iv. Farm Bureau
 - v. WV Land & Mineral...
 - vi. WV Press Association
- b. covered during “Reports,” above
- c. covered during “Reports,” above

Adjournment at 2:00 p.m

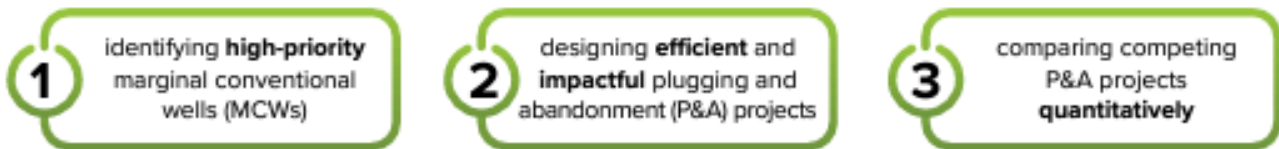
Action items

- (from last time) Jason will share the RFP (Request for Proposals) for the Administrator
- DEP will share the press release about the public meetings
- JH will share a presentation about PRIMO where it was tested in PA.
- JH will inquire about an email address to which people can submit electronic comments.

Next meeting: November 19, 2024, 2:00-3:30 p.m. (virtual meeting); note the time is different from previous meetings.

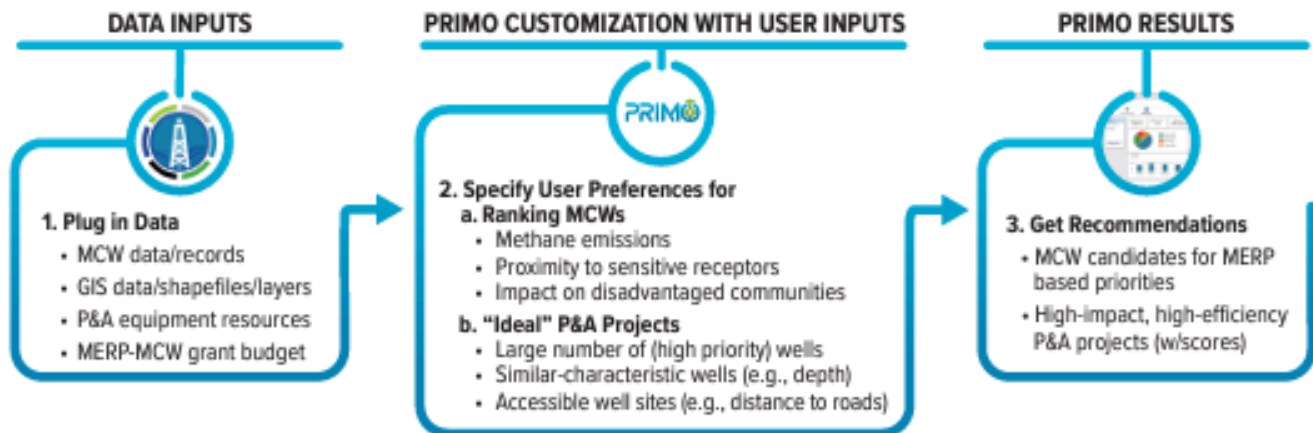
PRIMO is a **free and open-source** software decision-support tool developed by the Department of Energy's National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) to support the Methane Emissions Reduction Program (MERP) by:

MODULAR CAPABILITIES



HOW IT WORKS

1. Users provide data on wells (e.g., depth), site (e.g., population density) characteristics, and program provisions (e.g., budget)
2. Users specify priorities for ranking wells (e.g., methane emissions) and "ideal" plugging projects (e.g., number of wells per project)
3. PRIMO executes a rigorous, optimization-based routine to return specific recommendations for ideal well candidates for the MERP and high-impact, high-efficiency well plugging projects



PRIMO supports **data-based, transparent, and defensible** well selection and plugging decisions. PRIMO has been developed to support the MERP with funding from the EPA. There are no license fees or software use restrictions.

NETL is prepared and eager to assist MERP financial assistance recipients interested in PRIMO. For support and/or questions, contact PRIMO@netl.doe.gov.