



# COUNTY of VENTURA

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March 22, 2021

The Honorable Steve Bennet  
Member of the Assembly  
State Capitol  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 896 (Bennett) – Idle Gas and Oil Well Remediation (As revised 2/25/2021) – SUPPORT  
Set for hearing 3/24/2021 – Assembly Natural Resources Committee**

Dear Assembly Member Bennett:

On behalf of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, I write in support on AB 896, your measure that would grant additional authority to the Department of Conservation's Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) to better address remediation of idle gas and oil wells. This bill is set for hearing in the Assembly Natural Resources committee on March 24.

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 Ventura County.

AB 896 would expand existing provisions in Public Resources Code Section 3206 to permit CalGEM to impose a claim or lien when an idle well is found to be unsafe; the well operator has failed to pay required fees in a timely fashion; or the state has incurred costs, as specified, in the remediation of an idle well. The County of Ventura has clear policy supporting legislative efforts that (1) develops a clear plan, timeline, and funding mechanism to adequately assure the reclamation of all oil sites and infrastructure and (2) sets a finite time limit on the maintenance of oil wells in idle status.

Your measure represents a proactive, positive step in facilitating actions by well operators and other responsible parties that will promote proper remediation of idle gas and oil wells and reduce the potential for environmental risks. For these reasons, the County of Ventura is pleased to support AB 896. Thank you for your leadership on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Espinosa  
Legislative Advocate

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