



COUNTY of VENTURA

July 1, 2021

The Honorable Luz Rivas
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 3126
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 47 (Limón) – Oil and gas: hazardous and idle-deserted wells and production facilities (As amended 6/29/2021) – SUPPORT
Set for hearing 7/7/2021 – Assembly Natural Resources Committee**

Dear Chair Rivas:

On behalf of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, I write in support of SB 47, Senator Limón's measure that would increase from \$1 million to \$5 million – beginning in 2022-23 and annually thereafter – the California Geologic Energy Management Division's (CalGEM) expenditure authority for activities associated with plugging and remediating idle 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.

SB 47 clearly aligns with the Board's policy and vision for prioritizing the sealing of idle wells. This measure would dedicate additional, necessary resources to addressing deserted wells and mitigating associated public health and environmental risks. Under current law, CalGEM is authorized to spend up to \$3 million annually to remediate abandoned wells, but that expenditure authority – absent legislative action – would drop to \$1 million in 2022-23. The increased annual expenditure cap beginning next fiscal

year is justified and appropriate given that the risk of leaks and resulting contamination are too great a threat to leave unaddressed.

SB 47 represents a proactive, positive step in promoting 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 47. If there are questions about the County's position, I can be reached at ehe@hbeadvocacy.com or 916-272-0012. Thank you for considering the County's perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Espinosa
Legislative Advocate

Cc: Members and Consultants, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Monique Limón, Member of the Senate
Ventura County Delegation