



COUNTY *of* VENTURA

September 14, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 47 (Limón) – Oil and gas: hazardous and idle-deserted wells and production facilities
Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the Ventura County Board of Supervisors, I write to respectfully request your signature on SB 47, Senator Monique 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 respectfully requests your most positive consideration on SB 47 when it comes before you. Thank you for considering the County's perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth Espinosa", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elizabeth Espinosa
Legislative Advocate

Cc: The Honorable Monique Limón, Member of the Senate