



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Shapiro Administration Celebrates 500th Orphan and Abandoned Well Plugged, Continuing Historic Progress to Protect Public Health, Create Jobs, and Reduce Methane Emissions

The 500th well was plugged in Somerset Township, Washington County under an emergency contract with M&A Resources.

Under Governor Shapiro's leadership, DEP has plugged more abandoned wells in four years than the previous 12 years combined.

Plugging leaking abandoned wells reduces methane emissions, creates jobs, and protects public health across Pennsylvania.

Finleyville, PA – Today, **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Jessica Shirley** celebrated the plugging of the 500th orphan and abandoned well under the Shapiro Administration. This marks another major milestone in the Commonwealth's historic effort to protect public health, create jobs, and restore communities impacted by legacy oil and gas development — following DEP's previous [100th](#), [200th](#), [300th](#), and [400th](#) well plugging milestones.

Since taking office, the Shapiro Administration **has plugged more orphaned and abandoned wells than the previous 12 years combined**, demonstrating the Governor's commitment to funding the clean-up of environmental hazards all across the Commonwealth.

"I've spoken to the families and communities most affected by these leaking wells who are concerned about their water or the quality of the air near their homes — especially here in Western Pennsylvania," said **Governor Shapiro**. "By plugging orphaned and

abandoned wells, we're tackling a significant public health issue that affects our farmers while creating good paying jobs in the process. This is a smart, commonsense policy directly benefiting Pennsylvania-based companies like M&A Resources and the hardworking folks who are getting the job done."

The Shapiro Administration has made plugging orphan and abandoned wells a priority as these wells will often leak methane, threaten groundwater, create safety hazards, and limit opportunities for economic development and community revitalization. Plugging wells also helps reduce emissions, protect public health, create family-sustaining jobs, and prepare land for future use.

"Under Governor Shapiro's leadership, Pennsylvania is making historic progress plugging orphan and abandoned wells that threaten public health, communities, and the environment," said **Secretary Shirley**. "By maximizing every available state and federal funding source, DEP is shrinking Pennsylvania's inventory of orphan and abandoned wells, creating jobs, reducing methane emissions, and helping communities reclaim land that has been impacted for generations."

The 500th well was plugged in Somerset Township under an emergency contract with M&A Resources, which is based in Washington County. The well was actively leaking a significant volume of gas into the ground and atmosphere in a residential neighborhood prior to being unearthed and plugged collaboratively by DEP, the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), and McGill University.

"I'm proud of our team at M&A Resources and the role we've played in reaching this milestone. This work takes good people who show up every day, do the job right and care about the communities they serve," said **Jerome Bettis, Jerome Bettis, Chief Executive Officer, M&A Resources**. "We appreciate Governor Shapiro's commitment to this effort and our partnership with DEP. We're committed to continuing to grow, creating opportunities for Pennsylvania workers and doing our part to keep this important work moving forward across the Commonwealth."

"This is a multi-generational project that will directly help other families who live in close proximity to orphaned and abandoned wells throughout the Commonwealth and the United States," said **Adam Peltz, Director and Senior Attorney, EDF**. "The orphaned and abandoned well problem is big, but the work is just getting started. This is number 500, but we have to roll up our sleeves and continue to collaborate, in order to do this work and solve this problem in Pennsylvania — once and for all."

Shapiro Administration's Historic Progress on Plugging Abandoned Wells

DEP has identified more than 27,000 orphan and abandoned wells throughout Pennsylvania and continues prioritizing those that pose the greatest risks to public health, safety, and the environment. To address this issue and protect the Commonwealth's natural environment, the Governor directed DEP to leverage all available federal funding opportunities to accelerate well plugging efforts across Pennsylvania.

As a result, DEP is partnering with Penn State University to conduct a study to further identify and quantify chemical hazards associated with wells, characterize wells according to emissions and risks, assess human exposure, and develop recommendations for orphan and abandoned well priorities. The study will begin in October 2026 and is expected to end no later than June 30, 2031.

The study will be conducted using Phase 2 Formula Grant funds received from the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Orphaned Wells Program Office under the federal [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act \(IIJA\)](#). Since 2022, DOI has provided the Commonwealth with **\$216 million** to plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned and abandoned oil and gas wells through the IIJA.

Investing in Environmental Cleanup to Protect Pennsylvania's Air, Water, and Land

To continue defending Pennsylvanians' Constitutional right to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of the environment, **Governor Shapiro** also secured funding for environmental cleanup in the [2026-27 budget](#), including:

- Authorizes a one-time transfer of **\$19 million** to the [Well Plugging Program](#) so the Commonwealth can continue to plug abandoned oil and gas wells that pose a potential threat to Pennsylvanians' health and the environment.
- Authorizes a one-time transfer of **\$20 million** to the [Hazardous Sites Cleanup Program](#) protecting Pennsylvanians from the most dangerous toxic waste sites throughout the Commonwealth.

In February 2025, the Governor [filed a lawsuit](#) challenging the Trump Administration's unlawful freeze of federal funding. Thanks to that lawsuit and continued engagement with the Trump Administration, **more than \$2.1 billion** in federal funding is available to continue plugging abandoned wells leaking toxic chemicals, prevent sinkholes, and ensure Pennsylvanians have clean drinking water.

More information about the orphan and abandoned well plugging program is available [here](#).

If you know of the location of an undocumented abandoned or orphan well, you can report it on DEP's website: [Abandoned and Orphan Wells](#).

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