

Shapiro Administration Announces 100th Abandoned Well Plugged Since Taking Office

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On October 18, 2023, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro's office announced that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) and the Shapiro administration had capped and plugged 100 orphaned and abandoned wells since Shapiro took office in January 2023, which surpasses the total number of wells plugged in the previous six years combined. See [Press Release](#), Gov'r Josh Shapiro, "Shapiro Administration Has Plugged 100 Orphaned & Abandoned Wells in Just 10 Months, Surpassing Total Over Previous 6 Years Combined" (Oct. 18, 2023).

In addition to state resources, significant funding to address these wells comes from allocations to Pennsylvania from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Pub. L. No. 117-58, 135 Stat. 429 (2021). Pennsylvania received initial IIJA grant funding totaling \$25 million and is eligible for an additional \$300+ million in the coming years. See [Press Release](#), U.S. Dep't of the Interior, "Biden Administration Announces \$1.15 Billion for States to Create Jobs Cleaning Up Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells" (Jan. 31, 2022, updated June 5, 2023). According to the Shapiro administration, the IIJA funds are not only being used to cap and plug wells—PADEP has awarded contracts for 224 wells to date—but are also directed toward identifying and inventorying wells, as well as taking enforcement actions against applicable operators.

Approximately 45% of the wells are in environmental justice areas, which is consistent with the Biden administration's Justice40 Initiative. The goal of the Justice40 Initiative is to direct 40% of the benefits of certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities across one or more of seven areas: climate change, clean energy and energy efficiency, clean transit, affordable and sustainable housing, training and workforce development, remediation and reduction of legacy pollution, and the development of critical clean water and wastewater infrastructure. See White House, "Justice40, A Whole of Government Initiative" [here](#).

As of May 16, 2024, 175 wells have been plugged, with 51 remaining wells in progress. More information about this program and PADEP's progress can be found on the Oil & Gas IIJA Project Tracker [website](#).

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