

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment - SB Sierra Club

From: Emily Engel <emilyaengel@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 18, 2025 6:46 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: October 21 Agenda Item #2: Idle Wells

Caution: This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors,

The Santa Barbara Sierra Club, an organization that represents over 8000 members and supporters, encourages the county to actively pursue policies that support, encourage, and ensure the capping and securing of all idle wells in our county jurisdiction.

According to local experts, there is already a way for our county to request CALGEM to require Idle wells to be abandoned, but it has not yet worked due to limited resources. (Public Resources Code | Division 3. Oil and Gas | Chapter 1. Oil and Gas Conservation | Article 4. Regulation of Operations | § 3206.5.) We encourage you to put our collective resources toward exploring this and other options to protect and secure our local community and lands.

We all know that operators are responsible for plugging oil wells, but they have been slow to do so. There are thousands of known idle wells in Santa Barbara County. So, we encourage the Board to prohibit new wells being drilled in Santa Barbara County, so that later on that means fewer wells that will need to be plugged or worse abandoned later.

Idle well fees have not increased enough to truly reflect the potential costs associated with the State performing abandonment, and most operators prefer to pay the modest fees rather than properly abandon oil wells. In Santa Barbara County the majority of idle wells – 22 operators (69% of the 32 total) of 749 idle wells (61% of 1,221 total) – have no abandonment plans. Furthermore, plugging and restoring these wells could create upwards of 1,416 jobs over a 20-year phaseout timeframe.

Thank you for considering our comments and thank you for all you do to protect our community so we can thrive and prosper.

Sincerely,
Emily Engel
Santa Barbara Sierra Club Group Chair
93103