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Fifth District



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
County Administration Building  
105 East Anapamu Street Santa  
Barbara, CA 93101 Telephone:  
(805) 568-2190  
[www.countyofsb.org](http://www.countyofsb.org)

## **COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA**

**May 24, 2022**

Honorable Gustavo Lavayen  
Presiding Judge  
Santa Barbara Superior  
Court  
312 East Cook Street  
Santa Maria, CA 93454

Reference: Further Analysis Related to Santa Barbara Grand Jury report titled, "Idle Oil Wells In Santa Barbara County" published December 20, 2021.

Judge Lavayen:

On March 8, 2022, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors (Board) submitted responses to the above referenced Civil Grand Jury Report. As directed by the Grand Jury, all responses were provided in accordance with Section 933.05 of the California Penal Code. At that time, the Board determined that Recommendations 1 through 4 required further analysis.

Consistent with the timelines set forth in Penal Code § 933.05(b)(3), on May 24, 2022, the Board received and filed a presentation of further analysis related to the Civil Grand Jury Report. Attached herein is information about the further analysis conducted as it relates to Recommendations 1 through 4.

Sincerely,

Joan Hartmann, Chair  
Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

CC: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
Pamela Olsen, Foreperson, 2021 Santa Barbara Grand Jury

**Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors  
Further Analysis Related to the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury  
2021 Report “Idle Oil Wells In Santa Barbara County”**

**Finding 1**

**Petroleum regulatory agencies within the County of Santa Barbara do not adequately identify and monitor idle oil wells in Santa Barbara County, leaving residents exposed to health and environmental risks.**

The Board of Supervisors disagrees wholly with Finding 1.

**Planning & Development Department – Petroleum Unit**

The petroleum unit staff conducts annual inspections of all active and idle wells, as well as all associated facilities. In addition, the California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGem) and the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) also conduct inspections of oil wells in Santa Barbara County. The purpose of the petroleum unit’s inspections are to protect the health, safety, public welfare, physical environment and natural resources of the county by ensuring that active and idle wells are in conformance with the standards set forth in the Santa Barbara County Code, Chapter 25 (Petroleum Ordinance). If corrective actions are identified during the annual field inspection, staff immediately notifies the operator of the corrective actions and will perform follow-up re-inspections to ensure compliance. Failure of the operator to comply with the corrective actions could result in further enforcement action including but not limited to the issuance of Notices of Violation and fines, if necessary. The regulation of oil and gas wells through the petroleum unit annual inspection process minimizes the exposure of county residents to potential health and environmental risks.

Planning and Development (P&D) does not have a direct mechanism to know when wells become idle. Chapter 25 provides the following definitions for Idle Wells and Long-Term Idle Wells (LTIW) and CalGEM defines orphaned wells:

- "Idle well" means any well that has not produced oil or natural gas or has not been used for injection for six consecutive months of continuous operation during the last five or more years. An idle well does not include an active observation well.
- "Long-term idle well" means any well that has not produced oil or natural gas or has not been used for injection for six consecutive months of continuous operation during the last ten or more years. A long-term idle well does not include an active observation well.
- “Orphaned well”, according to CalGEM’s definition, is a well that has no party responsible making it the state’s responsibility to plug and abandon it. All orphaned wells are in an idle or long-term idle status, depending on the length of time the well has been non-operational. The County does not have a legal or financial responsibility to address orphaned wells as this liability falls to the state (CalGEM).

Chapter 25 does not require the operator to notify the county in advance if an oil and gas well is placed in an idle state. However, the owner/operator must notify the petroleum administrator when an idle

well becomes active (Section 25-8(a)).

The Inspection Services Section of the County Fire Department's Fire Prevention Division regulates onshore oil and gas operations and facilities maintenance by enforcing Chapter 15 of the County Code, the California Fire Code, and other state laws. County Code Chapter 15 and the California Fire Code provide the Fire Department with inspection and permitting authority for all onshore oil and gas facilities. Each oil and gas facility is inspected annually, with additional inspections performed to ensure compliance. All observed violations are entered into the Fire Department's record management system and an Inspection Report is delivered to the operator to notify them of the Department's findings.

The APCD regulates stationary sources of air pollution within the County, including onshore and offshore oil and gas production sources, under the authority of the federal Clean Air Act and the state Health and Safety Code. The APCD issues permits to oil and gas operators that specify limits on the air pollutants that they may emit, and then performs inspections to ensure operators comply with the specified emission limits. The APCD also issues Notices of Violation for failing to comply with permit conditions, and/or local, state, and federal rules and regulations. If an NOV is not immediately rectified, APCD staff follows up with the source to ensure compliance is achieved. The annual well and facility inspection schedules conducted by P&D, County Fire, and APCD are typically staggered throughout the year which provides constant regulatory oversight and reduces the county's risk of exposure to health and environmental risks.

It should be noted that CalGEM revised its idle well regulations in 2019 to create more stringent requirements on operators to create incentives for operators to manage and eliminate their idle wells by entering into [Idle Well Management Plans \(IWMPs\)](#). The regulations now require idle wells to be tested and, if necessary, repaired, or permanently abandoned. An idle well is defined by CalGEM as a well that for a period of 24 months has not either produced oil or natural gas. In addition to these new requirements, fees from operators are deposited into the Hazardous and Idle-Deserted Well Abatement Fund to help fund the permanent sealing and closure of deserted wells. Under the IWMP, operators are required to describe how idle wells are to be maintained and when they are expected to be plugged and abandoned or returned to service. Operators are encouraged to prioritize the phasing out of their long-term idle wells (idle for 8 years or more) either through abandonment or return to service. Further, operators are required to prepare an idle well inventory and evaluation plan that provides CalGEM with all the basic information needed to catalog each operator's idle wells.

## **Finding 2**

**The potential fiscal liabilities associated with idle oil wells in Santa Barbara County are not adequately quantified.**

The Board of Supervisors disagrees wholly with Finding 2.

Financial assurances for drilling new oil and gas wells or re-working wells are required by CalGEM prior to operation of a well Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 3204 through 3205.7 and the California Department of Conservation Geologic Energy Management Statutes & Regulations January 2020). Because financial assurances are collected by the state, the county does not require additional

financial sureties. The owner/operator(s) of idle and inactive wells are liable for all actual and potential fiscal liabilities should circumstances arise.

Pursuant to PRC Section 3255, if an operator becomes insolvent or deserts their idle wells, responsibility for permanently plugging and abandoning these wells falls to the state, unless the state can identify a responsible party. Funds used for state abandonments come from assessment fees and idle well fees paid to the state by operators. There are two state funds that are set up to address hazards with wells. The Hazardous and Idle-Deserted Well Abatement Fund (HIDWAF) is funded by idle well fees and continuously appropriated to CalGEM and is used to plug and abandon wells and mitigate a hazardous or potentially hazardous condition. The Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Administrative Fund (OGGA) is primarily funded by operator assessment fees and is used by CalGEM to mitigate a hazardous or potentially hazardous condition with orphan wells. Where there is a financially solvent, responsible operator, CalGEM will first pursue abandonment at the operator's expense.

CalGEM may determine the status of a well as orphaned based upon specific criteria laid out in PRC Section 3237. Evidence of a well's being deserted under the PRC includes, but is not limited to, failure to pay idle well fees, the operational history of the well or production facility, and the response or lack of response of the operator to inquiries and requests from CalGEM. Pursuant to PRC Section 3237(c)(5), CalGEM may undertake the plugging and abandonment of orphaned wells if they are unable to locate the previous well operator or if the previous operator does not have the financial resources to fully cover the cost to plug and abandon the well. A well that has been identified as orphaned is placed on a list of other orphan wells that are located throughout the state. When orphaned wells are identified as a potential danger to life, health, or natural resources and there is no operator that is responsible for plugging and abandoning them, they are identified as "hazardous wells" and are given a high priority to be plugged and abandoned by CalGEM. It is CalGEM's responsibility to allocate state funding to properly plug and abandon orphaned wells.

### **Finding 3**

**Active Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department, Energy, Minerals and Compliance Division, Petroleum Unit staff are currently too few in number to monitor idle oil wells in the County.**

The Board of Supervisors disagrees wholly with Finding 3.

Currently, there are two full-time Petroleum Inspectors and one part-time Supervisor assigned to P&D's Energy Minerals and Compliance Division (EMC) Petroleum Unit and there is overlap among the other departmental staff to perform critical inspection activities as needed. During the pandemic, staffing was impacted, however the department was able to conduct all required well inspections. The level of staffing is sufficient to complete the annual inspection of active and idle wells and their associated facilities, as well as respond to incidents. As noted above, in the event of a long-term absence of an inspector, the half time supervisor and another EMC staff member who have completed the 40-hour Hazwopper certification training program are available to provide additional support to assist with the annual inspections of oil and gas wells.

#### **Finding 4**

**Santa Barbara County Code provisions regarding removal of drilling equipment and derricks from idle wells within a specified time are not always followed, causing visual blight to some local residents.**

The Board of Supervisor disagrees wholly with Finding 4.

Chapter 25, Section 25-32 of the Petroleum Ordinance does not require dismantling of larger assets while the wells are idle, and Chapter 25 does not include a definition of “idle equipment.” It does require removal of all drilling equipment and the derrick from the drill site and leased premises within 60 days following *completion or abandonment*, which staff ensures is followed. Chapter 25 requires idle equipment to be maintained in an orderly fashion or moved to a designated storage area on the lease. As discussed in Finding No. 1 above, the Petroleum Unit staff conduct annual inspections of all active and idle wells and associated facilities. The annual well inspection process includes a visual assessment of the active and idle well site(s) and their lease area(s) to ensure that equipment is maintained in a safe and secure environment. The most common assets found on the lease site during the inspection process are the well pumping unit, storage tanks and pipelines. Smaller oil field equipment such as extra pump valves and piping and small storage vessels that store chemicals for maintaining the wells may be kept on the lease area as long as they are properly stored in designated areas. If any excess equipment is not stored in an orderly fashion, the petroleum inspectors will notify the operator immediately following the inspection of any corrective action items. Failure of the operator to comply with the corrective actions will result in further enforcement action including but not limited to the issuance of a Notice of Violation and fines, if necessary.

This finding refers specifically to the removal of drilling equipment and derricks. Drill rigs/derrick structures are used for petroleum exploration and are removed upon completion of a wellbore and replaced with an oil pumping unit. Section 25-32 of the Petroleum Ordinance requires the removal of all drilling equipment and the derrick from the drill site and leased premises within 60 days following completion or abandonment of the well. Workover oil rigs are utilized to perform normal maintenance on producing, injection, and idle wells in order to maintain the wells’ integrity. Due to the expense to rent and operate this equipment, workover rigs are commonly removed from the site once the well work is completed as required by Section 25-32.

#### **Recommendation 1**

**That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors instruct the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department to identify the health and environmental risks of idle oil wells in the County through an annual report to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors.**

#### **Prior Response Recommendation 1**

This recommendation requires further analysis to be completed by June 20, 2022. The annual well and facility inspections conducted by P&D, County Fire (facilities only) and APCD of active and idle wells provide regulatory oversight to minimize the county’s risk of exposure to public health and environmental risks. However, in order to provide the public with information regarding annual well

inspections, within one-year P&D could develop a public facing web portal that identifies inspection dates and results for each well inspected.

### **Further Analysis Recommendation 1**

Santa Barbara County's petroleum unit is unique in providing annual inspections of all active, idle and long-term idle wells, representing an additional level of oversight of active and idle wells that does not exist in other neighboring counties, while CalGEM assumes responsibility and oversight of all orphaned wells. All other neighboring oil-producing counties including Ventura County, San Luis Obispo County, Los Angeles County and Monterey County do not have staff who proactively conduct annual inspections on oil & gas wells including idle and orphan wells and rely solely on CalGEM for these well inspections. Similarly, the County Fire Departments of neighboring counties Ventura and Orange, both oil-producing counties, do not have "oil and gas" sections in their Fire Departments. Los Angeles County is the only nearby County that performs similar inspection services in this regard as the Santa Barbara County Fire Department. The petroleum unit does not inspect orphan wells, but other agencies, such as CalGEM and APCD do conduct inspections of these wells and will continue to do so until CalGEM receives the funding to properly plug and abandon them. Finally, both San Luis Obispo County APCD and Ventura County APCD perform oil and gas inspections similarly to how the Santa Barbara County APCD performs these inspections as described below.

#### **County Fire Department**

The Inspection Services Section of the County Fire Department's Fire Prevention Division regulates onshore oil and gas operations and facilities maintenance by enforcing Chapter 15 of the County Code, the California Fire Code, and other applicable state laws. County Code Chapter 15 and the California Fire Code provide the Fire Department with inspection and permitting authority for all onshore oil and gas facilities; which typically include habitable buildings, fire suppression equipment, water tanks, defensible space and Fire Department access. Each oil and gas facility is inspected annually, with additional inspections performed as needed to ensure compliance. The Fire Department does not inspect orphan or idle wells. Any observed violations are entered into the Fire Department's record management system and an Inspection Report is delivered to the operator to notify them of the Department's findings. If an operator is found to be non-compliant during inspections, the Department will pursue administrative enforcement including fines, misdemeanor citations, and possible imprisonment. The Fire Department collaborates with the District Attorney with regard to these enforcement actions. Additionally, the Inspection Services Section responds to oil spills in support of the California Department of Fish & Wildlife Office of Spill Prevention and Response (OSPR) to ensure that impacts to waterways, or wildlife due to an oil spill are avoided or minimized to the extent feasible. In the event of an oil spill the Fire Department assumes a Unified Command with OSPR, United States Coast Guard or the Environmental Protection Agency depending on the location of the spill.

#### **Santa Barbara County Air Pollution Control District (APCD)**

The APCD regulates stationary sources of air pollution within the County, including onshore oil and gas production sources, under the authority of the federal Clean Air Act and the state Health and Safety Code. The APCD issues permits for equipment and processes that have a potential to emit air pollutants at oil and gas facilities which may have active, idle, or orphaned wells. APCD staff routinely perform inspections at permitted oil and gas facilities to ensure operators comply with their APCD permit conditions, as well as federal, state, and local air pollution rules and regulations such as federal

Part 70 requirements, California Air Resources Board's Regulation for Greenhouse Gas Emission Standards for Crude Oil and Natural Gas Facilities, and APCD Fugitive Emissions Inspection and Maintenance Rule 331. During oil and gas facility inspections, the APCD uses an instrument to check for and measure hydrocarbon leaks, reviews the onsite equipment to make sure it matches the approved permit, reviews the facility's compliance with the operational restriction conditions of the permit, and reviews records. Facility inspections are performed at different frequencies based on the facility's potential to emit, actual emissions, and compliance history. All APCD permitted facilities are inspected at least once every three years, with most inspections occurring more frequently (e.g., once per quarter, once every six months, once per year, or once every two years). In addition to these routine inspections, the APCD may conduct additional inspections when odor or dust complaints are received and for surveillance purposes. Furthermore, the APCD has a specialized trailer-mounted portable monitor called the AirPointer that can be deployed in communities to measure particulate matter, hydrogen sulfide, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene, ozone, and meteorological conditions. The monitor can be deployed quickly and has the ability to store and transmit data to the APCD in real-time. If deficiencies are found during inspections, the APCD issues a Notice of Violation (NOV) to document the noncompliance which includes monetary penalties based on excess emissions released and the number of days of violation. If an NOV is not immediately rectified, APCD staff follows up with the source to ensure compliance is achieved. In addition, oil and gas facility operators are required to self-inspect their equipment for fugitive hydrocarbon leaks on an annual or quarterly basis, depending on the hydrocarbon leak history.

#### State of California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM)

In addition to the petroleum unit and the APCD, the State of California Department of Conservation (DOC) Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) staff also inspects idle wells within Santa Barbara County, providing an additional layer of oversight. CalGEM also regulates certain pipelines and facilities associated with oil production and wastewater injection. Operators are required to notify CalGEM prior to performing certain tests, inspections, and operations, as well as requiring or allowing CalGEM to witness certain tests, inspections, and operations. In 2019, CalGEM amended and adopted regulations to update its testing requirements for idle wells, active observation wells, and wells partially plugged, pursuant to Assembly Bill 2729. These regulations established requirements related to the maintenance and plugging and abandonment of idle wells. CalGEM witnesses testing of idle wells including fluid-level tests, casing pressure tests, and clean out tags. CalGEM also inspects deserted and orphan wells when preparing for state abandonment work, during the work, and after the work is completed. Additionally, CalGEM witnesses operations associated with the end-of-life plugging and abandonment of wells.

CalGEM conducts environmental inspections of active, idle, deserted, and orphan wells approximately once every two years. During these inspections, CalGEM staff check to ensure operators and wells follow the requirements of the Public Resources Code (PRC) and California Code of Regulations (CCR). This may include identifying potential problems and checking that wells and facilities are not leaking at the surface, well cellars are free of fluids, there is proper signage, sites are free of vegetation, and roads provide adequate access for necessary equipment or vehicles, in addition to other requirements of the PRC and CCR. Examples of equipment available to inspectors include cameras, drones, Photoionization Detectors (PID) and Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR) cameras for gas detection, GPS survey equipment, and well records. CalGEM has various enforcement mechanisms if operations are not in compliance including, notices of violation, civil penalties, and enforcement orders. Where appropriate, other agencies such as the Regional Water Quality Control Board,

California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Fire Department, United States Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency, Air Quality Control Board, County Petroleum, and others may be notified.

In addition to the well inspections, CalGEM also updated its Idle Well Program in 2019 to create more stringent requirements including incentives for operators to manage and eliminate their idle wells by entering into [Idle Well Management Plans \(IWMPs\)](#). The goal of the Idle Well Program is to eliminate idle wells in the State. An idle well is defined by CalGEM as a well that for a period of 24 months has not either produced oil or natural gas. These regulations now require operators to prepare an idle well inventory and evaluation plan that provides CalGEM with all the basic information needed to catalog each operator's idle wells. Under the IWMP, operators are required to describe how idle wells are to be maintained and when they are expected to be plugged and abandoned or returned to service. By submitting a plan, an operator agrees to eliminate a specified number of long-term idle wells, wells that have been idle for eight or more years, per year for each year of the plan. The number of long-term idle wells to be eliminated is dictated by statute and dependent on the operator's statewide idle well inventory. Operators are encouraged to prioritize the phasing out of their remaining long term idle wells (idle for 8 years or more) either through abandonment or return to service because the annual fees and testing requirements for idle wells steadily increase the longer they are kept in an idle state. These increasing costs and testing requirements provide an incentive for operators to plug and abandon their wells rather than keep them idle. In addition, fees from operators are deposited into the Hazardous and Idle-Deserted Well Abatement Fund to help fund the permanent sealing and closure of deserted wells.

The well and facility inspection schedules described herein and conducted by P&D, County Fire (facilities only), APCD and CalGEM are typically staggered throughout the year which provides constant regulatory oversight of operators and reduces the County's risk of exposure to health and environmental risks.

This recommendation will not be implemented. The annual well and facility inspections conducted by P&D, County Fire and APCD of active and idle wells, in addition to the oversight provided at the state level by CalGEM, provide sufficient regulatory oversight to minimize the county's risk of exposure to public health and environmental risks. Additionally, the records for these inspections are available to any interested party, upon request. However, in order to provide the public with information regarding annual well inspections, within one year P&D will develop a public facing web portal that identifies P&D inspection dates and results for each well inspected.

## **Recommendation 2**

**That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors instruct the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department to determine all actual and potential fiscal liabilities related to idle oil wells through an annual report to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors.**

## **Prior Response Recommendation 2**

This recommendation requires further analysis to be completed by June 20, 2022. As noted in the response to Finding 2 above, all fiscal liabilities related to idle oil wells are the responsibility of the

State or the operator. Information regarding CalGEM's financial assurance requirements (bonding) can be found on their website [https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/pubs\\_stats/Pages/forms.aspx](https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/pubs_stats/Pages/forms.aspx).

## **Further Analysis Recommendation 2**

Financial assurances for drilling new oil and gas wells or re-working existing wells are required by CalGEM prior to operation of a well pursuant to Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 3204 through 3205.7 and the California Department of Conservation Geologic Energy Management Statutes & Regulations (January 2020). Under these requirements, an operator who, on or after January 1, 2018, conducts certain alterations to a well, or who acquires a well, shall file with CalGEM an individual indemnity bond for each well altered or acquired in the amount of \$25,000-\$40,000. Because these financial assurances are collected by the state, the county does not currently require additional financial sureties. However, the P&D Long Range Planning work program includes direction by the Board of Supervisors to consider changes to the County's existing ordinances and policies that would further regulate oil and gas facilities with the intent of added protections for the environment. P&D is evaluating whether these changes could include a requirement for operators to provide financial assurances above and beyond those required by CalGEM, amongst other changes.

Beyond providing indemnity bonds prior to the operation of a well, the owner/operator(s) of idle and inactive wells are liable for all actual and potential fiscal liabilities should they arise. Funds used for state abandonments come from assessment fees and idle well fees paid to the state by operators. There are two state funds that are set up to address hazards with wells. The Hazardous and Idle-Deserted Well Abatement Fund (HIDWAF) is funded by idle well fees and continuously appropriated to CalGEM and is used to plug and abandon wells and mitigate a hazardous or potentially hazardous condition. The Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Administrative Fund (OGGA) is primarily funded by operator assessment fees and is used by CalGEM to mitigate a hazardous or potentially hazardous condition with orphan wells.

Pursuant to PRC Section 3237(c)(5), CalGEM has the authority to require a previous operator to abandon an orphaned well if the most recent operator doesn't have the financial resources to fully cover the cost of plugging and abandoning that well. Under these regulations, CalGEM may hold previous operator(s) financially responsible for abandonment dating back to any valid transfer of ownership of the well after January 1, 1996. If no previous operator is financially capable under these criteria, CalGEM may then undertake the plugging and abandonment of orphaned wells themselves. A well that has been identified as orphaned is placed on a list of other orphan wells that are located throughout the state. When orphaned wells are identified as a potential danger to life, health, or natural resources and there is no operator that is responsible for plugging and abandoning them, they are identified as "hazardous wells" and are given a high priority to be plugged and abandoned by CalGEM.

In addition to these currently applicable requirements, on April 4, 2022, CalGEM released a pre-rulemaking Discussion Draft for the purpose of receiving public input on proposed regulations requiring cost estimates where operators will need to report to CalGEM how much it will cost to plug and abandon their wells and remove the associated surface equipment.

At the federal level, approximately \$1.15 billion in funds will soon be made available under the Biden Administration Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for the plugging and abandonment of orphaned oil & gas wells throughout the Country. Under this program, CalGEM may receive up to \$25 million in

initial grants to address wells orphaned by (HVI Cat Canyon (formerly Greka) in Santa Barbara County, and is estimated to receive a total of \$166 million in federal grants to properly abandon orphaned wells throughout the State. Recently, Governor Newsome proposed an additional \$200 million in the state budget to plug and abandon orphaned wells.

This recommendation will not be implemented by the Board. All fiscal liabilities related to idle oil wells are the responsibility of the State or the operator. Information regarding CalGEM's financial assurance requirements (bonding) can be found on their website [https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/pubs\\_stats/Pages/forms.aspx](https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/pubs_stats/Pages/forms.aspx). Additional fiscal information associated with active and idle oil and gas equipment will likely be available through CalGEM's Rule making process that may also require operators to report cost estimates associated with plugging and abandoning their wells and removing their associated surface equipment. As noted above, the future County oil and gas ordinance amendment package which is aimed at further regulating oil and gas facilities to increase environmental protection may include a requirement for operators to provide financial assurances above and beyond those required by CalGEM.

### **Recommendation 3**

**That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors instruct the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department to maintain an adequate number of trained personnel to staff the Petroleum Unit of its Energy, Minerals and Compliance Division.**

### **Prior Response Recommendation 3**

The recommendation requires further analysis to be completed by June 20, 2022. The existing staff complete the work assigned to the Petroleum Unit under Chapter 25. As discussed above, the part-time supervisor and another Energy, Minerals and Compliance staff member are trained and are available to assist with annual inspections of oil and gas facilities when needed. These fully trained staff members help to ensure that there is adequate staffing to monitor active and idle wells in Santa Barbara County under the current code.

### **Further Analysis Recommendation 3**

The recommendation will not be implemented by the Board. As mentioned above, Santa Barbara County's petroleum unit is unique in providing annual inspections of all active and idle wells and facilities, representing an additional level of oversight of idle wells that does not exist in other coastal counties. These inspections, in conjunction with those carried out by APCD CalGEM staff provide an adequate frequency of inspections to ensure idle wells are monitored appropriately and do not negatively impact the health and safety of the community.

### **Recommendation 4**

**That the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors instruct the Santa Barbara County Planning and Development Department to enforce compliance with the Santa Barbara County Code Chapter 25 (the "Petroleum Code") provisions governing removal of oil equipment from idle wells.**

#### **Prior Response Recommendation 4**

This recommendation requires further analysis to be completed by June 20, 2022. Storage of idle oil well equipment is regulated by P&D's Petroleum Unit through the annual well and facilities inspection process. While the Chapter 25 does not require equipment to be removed from idle well locations, it does require the timely removal of equipment from drill sites for new wells and also from the sites of abandoned wells

#### **Further Analysis Recommendation 4**

The inspection findings are shared between the petroleum unit, APCD and CalGEM and if the other agencies identify unkempt equipment associated with idle wells, they notify the petroleum unit as a matter of practice to ensure operators are held to the requirements of Chapter 25.

This recommendation will not be implemented by the Board. This recommendation is not warranted and will not be implemented because the storage of idle oil well equipment is regulated by P&D's Petroleum Unit through the annual well and facilities inspection process. While Chapter 25 does not require equipment to be removed from idle well locations, it does require the timely removal of equipment from drill sites for new wells and also from the sites of abandoned wells. In addition to Chapter 25, the County Fire Department may require the removal of idle equipment if they determine it is required for fire safety or fire prevention actions.