



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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**Shapiro Administration Plugs 200th Orphaned and Abandoned Well,
Surpassing Total from Previous 9 Years Combined and Continuing
Historic Progress to Protect Public Health and Create Jobs**

Under Governor Shapiro's leadership, DEP has made historic progress by plugging 200 wells across the Commonwealth – reducing methane emissions, improving public health, and creating jobs in the process – more wells in just the first 14 months than in the previous 9 years combined.

The Shapiro Administration is ramping up its efforts to plug wells, plugging the last 100 wells in about half the time it took to plug the first 100 wells.



West Sunbury, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro**, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) **Interim Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**, and local legislative and environmental leaders joined the **Penn Mechanical Group** crew in Butler County to plug the 200th orphaned or abandoned well under the Shapiro Administration.

This is the latest milestone under Governor Shapiro’s leadership to protect public health and [create thousands of good-paying jobs](#) by plugging orphaned and abandoned wells across the Commonwealth. The 200th well plugged today by the Shapiro Administration surpasses the total of the last 9 years combined after just 14 months in office – and represents a continued increase in the pace of well plugging efforts. The Shapiro Administration celebrated the 100th well plugging nine months after taking office – and the Administration has plugged an additional 100 wells in less than five months since then.

“When I took office, I directed the Department of Environmental Protection to move aggressively to draw down as much federal funding as possible to make a meaningful impact plugging orphaned and abandoned wells. And so today – thanks to federal investments and the good work of the folks at DEP and contractors like Penn Mechanical – I’m proud to announce that this well will be the 200th well plugged during my time as Governor,” said **Governor Josh Shapiro**. “By plugging orphaned and abandoned wells, we’re tackling a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions and creating thousands of good-paying jobs in the process. This is a smart, commonsense way to combat climate change, promote public health, and create jobs. In the coming days, I’ll be announcing a commonsense energy policy that further protects the public, creates energy jobs, and grows our energy economy so that we can lower costs for consumers and build on our Commonwealth’s legacy of energy leadership.”

Governor Shapiro has directed DEP to draw down as much federal funding as possible to cap and plug orphaned and abandoned wells to improve public health, reduce planet-warming methane emissions, and create good-paying jobs. The Governor’s [2024-25 budget](#) also proposes **\$11 million** to continue to support this historic progress of identifying and plugging as many orphaned and abandoned wells as possible.

It’s estimated that there are more than 350,000 orphaned and abandoned wells across our Commonwealth – and they make up nearly 8% of our total methane emissions.

Methane is particularly dangerous because it is up to 86 times more potent than carbon dioxide – warming our planet and contributing to air pollution that damages our lungs and our hearts.

“For centuries, our coal mines and oil fields have made Pennsylvania an energy and economic leader around the world. Pennsylvania is embracing that leadership role while addressing the threat these wells pose,” said **DEP Interim Acting Secretary Jessica Shirley**. “Orphaned and abandoned oil and gas wells represent over a billion-dollar liability for the Commonwealth that DEP is tackling head on – and the Shapiro Administration is approaching this moment as a major opportunity to create jobs and improve public health and the environment, and we are going to continue to build on this success.”

Through the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), DEP has completed an unprecedented number of well plugging projects with a goal to plug the most wells and eliminate the worst environmental and public health and safety hazards. With approximately **\$28 million** in plugging projects contracted by the Shapiro Administration to date, small businesses like the contractor for this project – Penn Mechanical Group – can hire more staff, purchase equipment, and project their business operations into the future. Penn Mechanical, a family-owned and operated business headquartered in Indiana, PA, employs 150 Pennsylvania workers. The Milton W. Campbell 6 well is one of 24 wells in this IIJA plugging contract.

“Plugging abandoned and orphaned wells across the Commonwealth has been a priority for the Shapiro Administration,” said **Tyler Shank, Vice President of Penn Mechanical Group**. “As a local business providing a wide variety of industry services, Penn Mechanical Group and all of our valued employees are grateful to participate in this program and be a part of this significant milestone.”

In October 2023, the Shapiro Administration reached the milestone of [100 capped and plugged wells](#) at Hillman State Park under an emergency contract with Yost Drilling after DEP followed up on reports from local residents concerned about the risks abandoned wells pose to public health and safety.

DEP is aggressively going after operators who are walking away from wells and stepping in with emergency plugging contracts where needed to protect public health. Through IIJA funding and existing state funding for DEP, the Commonwealth is moving aggressively to tackle this massive contributor of greenhouse gasses.

“This event reflects the tireless work of the Department of Environmental Protection and Governor Shapiro’s administration to maximize federal investment and help address Pennsylvania’s pollution legacies,” said **PEC president Tom Gilbert**. “The scale of orphaned wells across our Commonwealth serves as a reminder that there is enormous opportunity to create jobs and improve public health and safety while reducing harmful emissions. We are pleased to have the strong partnership of the governor as we all work toward these goals.”

“I would like to welcome Governor Shapiro to Butler County and thank him for his strong support for plugging orphaned and abandoned wells throughout the Commonwealth. The Governor’s support of this program is critical in addressing environmental concerns as well as creating thousands of good paying jobs in this sector,” said **Representative Tim Bonner**. “Good stewardship of our natural resources will continue Pennsylvania’s leadership in the energy sector, strengthen and grow our skilled work force and result in a cleaner, safer and healthier environment for our land and our people now and for generations to come.”

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