LEADING TEXAS ENERGY
OIL & GAS ★ COAL ★ PIPELINES

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Our mission is to serve Texas by our stewardship of natural resources and the environment, our concern for personal and community safety, and our support of enhanced development and economic vitality for the benefit of Texans.

RRC Hits New Record in Tackling Orphaned Wells

Protecting public safety and the environment remained a top RRC priority in Fiscal Year 2026, with the commission plugging more than 2,000 orphaned wells statewide, exceeding the Performance Measure set by the Texas Legislature by 300 wells or 18.9%.

Operators responsibly plug approximately 86% of oil and gas wells. However, orphaned wells are inactive, non-compliant wells that have been inactive for a minimum of 12 months and the responsible operator's Organizational Report (Form P-5) has been delinquent for greater than 12 months.

When a well is designated as orphaned, the RRC assumes responsibility for monitoring it and oversees its plugging through supervised contractors. The agency prioritizes high-risk wells first, scoring each site based on age, location, condition and potential environmental impact to protect local communities.

During the last fiscal year, the RRC plugged 2,022 wells at a cost of $125,643,478. Funding for well-plugging activities comes from multiple sources, including federal and state appropriations and contributions from the oil and natural gas industry. These industry contributions are made directly through the RRC's Oil and Gas Regulation and Cleanup Fund and indirectly through production taxes deposited into the General Revenue Fund. The RRC works with the Attorney General, Comptroller's Office and collection agencies to seek reimbursements of public funds from the operator of record.

"Protecting Texas land and groundwater requires decisive action. Our fiscal year 2026 accomplishments demonstrate the RRC's firm dedication to environmental and public safety," stated Wei Wang, Executive Director of the RRC.

"We are grateful to the Texas Legislature for its continued funding, which enables us to address high-priority orphan wells effectively. Through the responsible allocation of these resources, the RRC continues to advance efforts to eliminate hazards permanently and safeguard Texas's environment for future generations."

During the previous legislative session, several measures were enacted to address orphaned wells, including SB 1146, which streamlines the process for operators to plug orphaned wells on or near their leases, and SB 1150, which requires operators to plug wells that are over 25 years old and have been inactive for at least 15 years.

For more information on the RRC's award-winning well-plugging program and related efforts, visit: https://www.rrc.texas.gov/oil-and-gas/environmental-cleanup-programs/.

House Natural Resources Chair Tours Produced Water Pilot Project



The RRC continues to lead the nation in oilfield innovation. RRC Executive Director Wei Wang and Texas House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Cody Harris visited an RRC-authorized produced-water treatment pilot project that is delivering strong results.

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