

**PATRICK PAGE CORTEZ**  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE



**CLAY SCHEXNAYDER**  
SPEAKER OF THE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## LOUISIANA LEGISLATURE

July 24, 2020

"Bill" Cassidy  
U.S. Senator  
520 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Clay Higgins  
U.S. Representative, 3rd District  
424 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

John Kennedy  
U.S. Senator  
416 Russell Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

"Mike" Johnson  
U.S. Representative, 4th District  
418 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Steve Scalise  
U.S. Representative, 1st District  
2049 Rayburn HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Ralph Abraham  
U.S. Representative, 5th District  
417 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Cedric Richmond  
U.S. Representative, 2nd District  
506 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Garret Graves  
U.S. Representative, 6th  
2402 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 2051

RE: COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Relief / Orphan Wells

To the Members of the Louisiana Congressional Delegation:

As fellow public servants of the people of Louisiana, we commend you for your efforts to advocate on behalf of our citizens during this unprecedented crisis. We have intently followed the negotiations on the new COVID-19 economic stimulus relief package aimed to alleviate the impacts of the pandemic. It has come to our attention that support is gathering for directing a portion of the stimulus dollars to plugging the thousands of orphaned oil and gas wells across the nation that have been abandoned by the owner or operator without proper closure.

The issue of orphaned wells is of great concern to the Louisiana Legislature and the state of Louisiana. Since its creation in 1993, the Oilfield Site Restoration Program has properly plugged 3,302 orphan wells at a cost of \$128 million. While we have made some headway, we still face

the challenge of plugging approximately 4,200 remaining wells. The challenge will likely grow more difficult as more operators shutter their operations as a result of the steep fall in oil and gas prices in addition to the economic impacts of the COVID crisis. The Louisiana Office of Conservation estimates that an additional \$125 million are required to plug the remaining wells.

The economic impact of the drop in oil and gas prices has sent a ripple through the industry sending oilfield and support service workers home and leaving skilled workers and equipment idle. The proposal of using stimulus money to plug orphan wells would bring relief to our state on several fronts. First, Louisiana workers and companies could go back to work. Further, instead of drilling wells for a market glutted with product, their skills and equipment would be used to plug wells that adversely affect our environment by leaking oil, methane, and brine. Finally, once this backlog of orphan wells is addressed state efforts could focus on ensuring new wells either never become orphaned or are timely plugged.

Given the current economic situation and the economic and environmental benefits to our citizens, we urge you to take such actions as are necessary to support using stimulus money for plugging orphan wells. We thank you for your attention to and efforts on behalf of this most pressing issue.

Sincerely,



Bob Hensgens  
Senator, District 26



Jean-Paul P. Coussan  
Representative, District 45

CC:  
Governor John Bell Edwards  
Commissioner Richard P. Ieyoub  
Tyler Gray, LMOGA  
Gifford Briggs, LOGA