



# DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

## FACT SHEET

### Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources

Created by the Legislature in 1915, the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR) ensures the safe exploration and development of energy resources. It oversees the drilling, operation and closure of oil, gas, and geothermal wells – an important step in protecting public safety and protecting the environment. The Division also oversees enhanced recovery projects intended to maximize production from the state's oil reservoirs. DOGGR provides many other services including:

#### Well Records, Field Maps, and Production Statistics

DOGGR is the clearinghouse for information about the state's oil, natural gas, and geothermal industries. More than 190,000 well records, production and injection statistics, well logs and field maps are available at four district offices. Some of this information is also available on the Department of Conservation website. This information is valuable not only to energy resource companies and consultants, but to local governments, land-use planners, and the public.

#### Blowout Prevention

Blowouts occur when natural formation fluids – gas, oil, or water – flow uncontrolled from a well bore. If the flow is not controlled, formation fluids can contaminate the surface and resources are lost. In serious instances, blowouts can be a threat to public safety and the environment. Controlling the pressure in a well bore is the key to preventing blowouts. DOGGR monitors proper installation and maintenance of blowout prevention equipment, closely regulating the design of well casing, an important well control component.

#### Idle and Deserted Well Plugging and Abandonment

When a well is not capable of producing, it must be shut-in properly and, eventually, plugged and abandoned (permanently sealed). Otherwise, it will

deteriorate and corrode, potentially becoming an environmental and safety concern. Usually, operators shut down wells properly under DOGGR supervision. A well is considered deserted when there is no one to take responsibility for plugging and abandoning it. In such cases, DOGGR steps in and does the work with industry-provided funds. DOGGR is authorized to spend up to \$2 million per year to plug deserted wells. To reduce the number of idle wells that may become orphaned, the Department of Conservation sponsored Assembly Bill 2729, which was signed by Governor Brown and will be implemented over the next several years. This measure establishes a new definition of "idle well," sets a fee structure intended to encourage operators to reduce their idle well inventory, and requires operators to develop an idle well management plan.

#### Geothermal Wells

DOGGR regulates the state's approximately 1,000 geothermal wells, as well as the potential sites of new wells. California is the largest generator of electricity from geothermal energy in the United States. The Geysers in Sonoma and Lake counties is the largest geothermal field in the world. In 2017, California received 5.7 percent of its electrical energy from in-state geothermal resources.

#### Land Use Development On or Near Old Wells

DOGGR retains well records dating back to the early 1900s, which allows it to conduct a well record review and compare a well abandonment with current abandonment standards. DOGGR has authority to order the re-abandonment of any well that is hazardous or that poses a danger to health, the environment, or natural resources.

#### Offshore

Oil production from offshore wells accounts for roughly six percent of California's total oil production. Although there is a leasing moratorium in state waters, DOGGR permits the drilling, re-works, and

abandonments of existing wells in state waters extending three miles from the coastline. DOGGR's Cypress, Ventura, and Orcutt offices attend to offshore matters, including islands and platforms, in addition to wells directionally drilled onshore to oil and gas fields offshore.

### **Underground Injection Control**

Because California's oil fields are mature (production began in the early 1900s in some locations), many of California's wells need stimulation to extract the remaining resources. DOGGR has state and federal authority to regulate injection to assist in oil recovery. As new technologies emerge to enhance oil recovery, DOGGR strives to adjust regulations to continually ensure the safety of the environment and the resources.

### **Well Stimulation Regulations**

DOGGR is responsible for regulating the oil and gas industry's use of well stimulation techniques, including hydraulic fracturing, under the terms of Senate Bill 4 (SB 4), as of January 1, 2014. DOGGR created permanent regulations that went into effect July 2015. The goal of these regulations is to provide the public with information about when and where well stimulation is used, to protect public health and the environment, and to give the oil and gas industry a clear set of standards for which it will be accountable when using those techniques.

### **Underground Gas Storage Regulations**

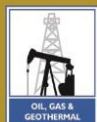
Specific Underground Gas Storage (UGS) regulations that expand upon existing Underground Injection Control (UIC) regulations are set to take effect October 1, 2018. The new rules build on emergency regulations adopted by the Department in February 2016, and the requirements in Senate Bill 887 (Pavley, Chapter 673, Statutes of 2016). Prior to the approval of the emergency regulations, the UIC program broadly covered UGS wells. However, the UIC program and UGS program have different and distinct concerns and practices. The new UGS regulations address a more complete regulatory scheme tailored specifically to UGS wells, and actions already undertaken by operators (voluntarily and by order of the State Supervisor of Oil and Gas). The regulations include new or revised requirements

pertaining to testing and monitoring, well construction standards that ensure gas storage wells maintain integrity over time, and risk management plans.

### **DOGGR Renewal Plan**

A Renewal Plan was developed in 2015 and updated in 2017 to guide DOGGR's reform and accelerate progress underway since 2012. The Division is refocused on using the best scientific and engineering knowledge and practices to put public health, safety, and environmental protection at the forefront of its oil and gas industry regulatory oversight.

For more information, please click [Renewal Plan](#).



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