



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION Fact Sheet

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Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources

The California Department of Conservation's Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources, in cooperation with the Offices of Mayor Eric Garcetti, Councilmember Gil Cedillo, and the City of Los Angeles, will begin a public benefit project to permanently seal two wells on Firmin Street that have been deserted by operators.

A community forum will be held next week to inform residents of the activities, timing, and plans, and to address any questions or concerns.

A separate flyer with information about the meeting time and location will be distributed next week.

TWO PROBLEMATIC FIRMIN STREET WELLS

- ◆ The Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources (Division) recently learned that two old wells in the Granite Hill neighborhood of Echo Park near downtown Los Angeles are seeping small amounts of gas. This is not a cause for alarm, but it is a potential health and safety concern.
- ◆ Both wells are located within feet of the front door of residences on Firmin Street's narrow cul-de-sac.
- ◆ The two wells -- Patel 1 (API # 03718960) and Rogalske 10 (API #03725662) – were both drilled sometime prior to 1903.
- ◆ Patel 1 has been classified as an “orphan” (deserted) well since 2006. The Division attempted in 2014 to contract for services to seal this well, but the bid amounts exceeded the available budget. In 2015, the Division received odor complaints across the street from Patel 1 and property owner uncovered the buried H. Rogalske 10 well near the location of the odor complaints. The well was found to be unsecured and seeping a very small amount of gas. The Division decided to remediate both of these potential hazards at the same time.
- ◆ The most recent leak test conducted on June 8, 2016, showed negligible readings for both methane and hydrogen sulfide at the surface. However, there was a noticeable “rotten egg” smell near the well, indicative of low concentrations of hydrogen sulfide.

The gas in these wells occurs naturally in the ground at a much lower pressure and volume than in a gas storage field, so a leak like what occurred in Aliso Canyon could not occur here.

SEALING THE WELLS

- ◆ The Division’s contractor will perform a variety of tasks to seal the wells and to restore the well sites over the course of approximately six weeks. The contractor will use equipment suited for tight locations. Before the well work starts, overhead utility service (power, phone, and cable) will be temporarily rerouted to provide for overhead access to the wells.
- ◆ Both well sites will be prepared by temporarily removing fencing, concrete, and debris, and placing temporary cellars and fencing around the wells. Site preparation is expected to take a week. Well servicing equipment (rig and pump) will then be moved in, which will result in closing the street to all vehicle traffic from the cul-de-sac to 336 Firmin for approximately 4 weeks.
- ◆ To ensure safety, the project will begin at Patel 1, 324 Firmin Street, with the installation of well control equipment, and the use of specialized equipment to evaluate the mechanical condition of the well. At the same time, a second, smaller specialty rig will be moved onto the Rogalske 10, 323 Firmin Street. The Rogalske 10 rig will secure the well by cementing steel pipe in the well to provide for the installation of safety equipment. This operation will take place without stopping, possibly requiring 24 hours to complete. After Rogalske 10 is secured, the specialty rig will move off the site. The larger well-servicing rig will complete the sealing of Patel 1 by running three-inch pipe all the way to bottom of the well to completely fill it with cement. Well-servicing equipment will then be moved to Rogalske 10 to fill it with cement like Patel 1.
- ◆ Once the wells are permanently sealed, the street will be reopened to traffic. Power, phone, and cable service will be returned to their original routing as part of site restoration. Complete site restoration will take about a week.
- ◆ The public is likely to experience inconveniences during the project. Power, phone, and cable service interruptions of up to two hours will take place at the beginning and the end of the project. When well service equipment is on location (about four weeks), traffic control will be in effect, and about one-third of Firmin Street will be blocked. Emergency vehicle access will be maintained. Heavy equipment and vehicles will use Firmin and Temple streets to access the work site daily. Residents and visitors may have difficulty finding parking, and will be required to walk to homes beyond the barricade. Work will generally only occur during daylight hours. All reasonable efforts will be made to mitigate inconveniences.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- ◆ The Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources – part of the Department of Conservation -- oversees the drilling, operation, maintenance, and “plugging and abandonment” of oil, natural gas, and geothermal wells.
- ◆ One of the Division’s functions is ensuring that wells for which there is no responsible operator – known as “orphan wells” -- are permanently sealed.
- ◆ The funds to do this work come from industry fees. The Division is authorized to spend up to \$1 million per year to permanently seal wells that have been left deserted. Contractors are hired to do the work and the Division supervises the operations to make sure the public is protected.
- ◆ Since 1977, the Division has plugged more than 1,350 orphan wells at a cost of more than \$27 million. As of December, 2015, there were 107 wells on the waiting list to be plugged; seven have been sealed in 2016. The Division prioritizes sites that leak or are close to residential or environmentally sensitive areas.

Timely information and updates will be available for neighbors and the community at www.conservation.ca.gov