pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

HOW TO APPLY FOR ORPHAN/ABANDON COMMONWEALTH FINANCING AUTHORITY (CFA) WELL PLUGGING GRANT

Overview

Since the first commercial oil well was drilled in Pennsylvania in 1859, it is estimated that between 300,000 and 760,000 oil and gas wells have been drilled in the state. Of those, approximately 100,000 to 560,000 are still unaccounted for. In the early years of oil and gas development in Pennsylvania, many abandoned wells either were left unplugged or were plugged using techniques that do not provide the same level of environmental protection as modern plugging standards. An unplugged or improperly plugged abandoned well represents a potential hazard to public health and safety and may pollute the environment. Water and soil contamination, as well as gas migration, have all been attributed to leaking wells.

Act 13 of 2012 establishes the Marcellus Legacy Fund and allocates impact fee monies to the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) for funding orphan or abandoned well plugging projects using the Orphan or Abandoned Well Plugging (OAWP) Program. Competitive grants awarded under the OAWP Program may be used to plug orphan and abandoned wells for which no responsible party exists and that have the potential to cause health, safety, or environmental concerns. Highlights of the OAWP Program are summarized below:

- **Eligible projects:** Well plugging/stray gas mitigation systems/well venting
- **Application period:** February 1 – May 31
- **Maximum grant level:** $1 million per project
- **Grant processing fee:** $100
- **Applicant cost sharing:** Eligible applicants shall provide easements and rights-of-way, and landowner commitments
- **Grant period:** Up to 3 years
- **Eligible applicants**: Municipalities, councils of government, non-profits, colleges/universities, watershed organizations, for-profit businesses
  - Please see link to informative PDF for clarification of for-profit businesses and watershed organizations
- **Read more:**

  www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Energy/OilandGasPrograms/OilandGasMgmt/LegacyWells/Pages/Grants.aspx

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) oil and gas staff are available to assist grant applicants with the technical requirements of the application. Applicants may also choose to submit a Good Samaritan Law application to DEP for liability relief. For more information regarding legacy well issues, Good Samaritan Law and the CFA grant application process, select the following link: www.dep.pa.gov/growinggreener and click on the "Environmental Good Samaritan Act" link.

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FACT SHEET