



# H.R. 4877, the Abandoned Well Remediation Research and Development Act

*Introduced by Rep. Summer Lee (D-PA) and Rep. Stephanie Bice (R-OK). Cosponsored by Reps. Deborah Ross (D-NC), Haley Stevens (D-MI), Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-NM), Valerie Foushee (D-NC), and Maxwell Frost (D-FL)*

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H.R. 4877, the Abandoned Well Remediation Research and Development Act, directs research, development, and demonstration activities at the Department of Energy (DOE) to support and accelerate the remediation of abandoned or orphaned oil and gas wells.

## Background

Currently, there is estimated to be 700,000 to 3,000,000 abandoned wells in the U.S., costing between \$30,000 to \$1,000,000 per well to plug. Wells in remote locations, like tribal lands, are more difficult to locate and plug, thus increasing the cost and likelihood it remains unmitigated. Improving the technologies and methods associated with the plugging and remediation process for abandoned wells could reduce the overall costs, improve the efficiency of remediation, mitigate environmental harms, and reduce methane emissions.

While Sec. 40601 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides direction and funding for plugging, remediation, and reclamation of orphaned wells located on Federal and state lands, it provides minimal policy direction to help decrease the cost of these activities. Additionally, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act appropriated \$30,000,000 for the Secretary of Energy to conduct research and development related to abandoned and orphaned wells but does not establish a continuous program or objectives to conduct this work long term.

The research and development program established by H.R. 4877 would direct DOE activities for the sole purpose of testing, developing, and demonstrating technologies to reduce the cost of plugging, remediating, and restoring abandoned or orphaned wells. It would also improve technology to pinpoint and map the location of abandoned wells. DOE is uniquely positioned to carry out this program with existing researchers and infrastructure within the Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management while not regulating or taxing methane and other greenhouse gas emissions.

The total amount of authorization of appropriations in this bill is \$162,500,000. That amount is offset by an equal reduction in authorization of appropriations for DOE activities within the CHIPS & Science Act.