

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4877

To amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to direct the Secretary of Energy to carry out a research, development, and demonstration program with respect to abandoned wells, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 25, 2023

Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania (for herself, Mrs. BICE, Ms. ROSS, and Ms. STEVENS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

A BILL

To amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to direct the Secretary of Energy to carry out a research, development, and demonstration program with respect to abandoned wells, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Abandoned Well Reme-
5 diation Research and Development Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO THE ENERGY POLICY ACT OF 2005.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Energy Policy Act of 2005
8 is amended—

1 (1) by adding at the end of subtitle F of title
2 IX (42 U.S.C. 16291 et seq.) the following new sec-
3 tion:

4 **“SEC. 969E. ABANDONED WELLS RESEARCH, DEVELOP-**
5 **MENT, AND DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.**

6 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 120 days
7 after the date of the enactment of this section, the Sec-
8 retary of Energy shall, in coordination with relevant Fed-
9 eral and state agencies and entities, establish a research,
10 development, and demonstration program to improve—

11 “(1) data collection on the location of aban-
12 doned wells;

13 “(2) the plugging, remediation, reclamation,
14 and repurposing of abandoned wells; and

15 “(3) strategies to mitigate potential environ-
16 mental impacts of documented and undocumented
17 abandoned wells.

18 “(b) ACTIVITIES.—The research, development, and
19 demonstration under subsection (a) shall include activities
20 to improve—

21 “(1) remote sensor capabilities, LiDAR capa-
22 bilities, optical gas imaging, magnetic survey tech-
23 nology, and any other technologies relevant to the ef-
24 ficient identification of abandoned wells;

1 “(2) understanding of how certain parameters
2 of abandoned wells affect methane emission rates of
3 such wells, including parameters such as well age,
4 well depth, geology, construction, case material, and
5 geographic region;

6 “(3) the efficiency and cost-efficacy of processes
7 for plugging, remediating, reclaiming, and
8 repurposing abandoned wells, including—

9 “(A) improvement of processes and tech-
10 nologies for the unique challenges associated
11 with plugging remote abandoned wells;

12 “(B) use of low carbon, lightweight cement
13 or use of alternative materials and additives for
14 plugging purposes; and

15 “(C) repurposing of abandoned wells for
16 alternative uses, including geothermal power
17 production or carbon capture, utilization, and
18 storage; and

19 “(4) understanding of the impacts of aban-
20 doned wells on groundwater quality and contamina-
21 tion.

22 “(c) COORDINATION.—In carrying out the program
23 established in (a), the Secretary shall ensure coordination
24 of these activities with institutions of higher education, the

1 Department of Energy National Laboratories, and the pri-
2 vate sector.

3 “(d) ABANDONED WELL DEFINED.—In this section,
4 the term ‘abandoned well’ means a well originally drilled
5 in connection with oil and gas operations that is not being
6 used, has not been plugged, and has no anticipated use
7 in oil and gas operations.

8 “(e) FUNDING.—There is authorized to be appro-
9 priated to the Secretary to carry out this section amounts
10 authorized pursuant to section 10771 of subtitle O of title
11 VI of the Research and Development, Competition, and
12 Innovation Act (enacted as division B of Public Law 117–
13 167), as follows:

14 “(1) For fiscal year 2024, \$30,000,000.

15 “(2) For fiscal year 2025, \$31,250,000.

16 “(3) For fiscal year 2026, \$32,500,000.

17 “(4) For fiscal year 2027, \$33,750,000.

18 “(5) For fiscal year 2028, \$35,000,000.

19 “(f) SUNSET.—This section shall terminate five years
20 after the date of the enactment of this section.”; and

21 (2) in the table of contents in section 1(b) (42
22 U.S.C. 15801 note), by inserting after the matter
23 relating to section 969D the following new item:

“Sec. 969E. Abandoned wells research, development, and demonstration pro-
gram.”.

1 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (6) of
2 section 10771 of subtitle O of title VI of the Research
3 and Development, Competition, and Innovation Act (en-
4 acted as division B of Public Law 117–167) is amended—

5 (1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A),
6 by striking “2026” and inserting “2028”;

7 (2) in subparagraph (A), by striking
8 “\$600,000,000” and inserting “\$507,500,000”;

9 (3) in subparagraph (B), by striking “and”
10 after the semicolon;

11 (4) in subparagraph (C)—

12 (A) by striking “\$1,000,000,000” and in-
13 serting “\$930,000,000”; and

14 (B) by striking the period and inserting “;
15 and”; and

16 (5) by adding at the end the following new sub-
17 paragraph:

18 “(D) \$162,500,000 to carry out abandoned
19 wells research, development, and demonstration
20 activities under section 969E of the Energy
21 Policy Act of 2005, in accordance with such
22 section.”.

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