

Union Calendar No. 175

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4877

[Report No. 118-215]

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

SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

Additional sponsors: Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ, Mrs. FOUSHEE, and Mr. FROST

SEPTEMBER 22, 2023

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on July 25, 2023]

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 Remedi-*
5 *ation 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 is*
8 *amended—*

9 *(1) by adding at the end of subtitle F of title IX*
10 *(42 U.S.C. 16291 et seq.) the following new section:*

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

13 *“(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 120 days after*
14 *the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of*
15 *Energy shall, in coordination with relevant Federal and*
16 *state agencies and entities, establish a research, develop-*
17 *ment, and demonstration program to improve—*

18 *“(1) data collection on the location of abandoned*
19 *wells;*

20 *“(2) the plugging, remediation, reclamation, and*
21 *repurposing of abandoned wells; and*

22 *“(3) strategies to mitigate potential environ-*
23 *mental impacts of documented and undocumented*
24 *abandoned wells.*

1 “(b) *ACTIVITIES.*—*The research, development, and*
2 *demonstration under subsection (a) shall include activities*
3 *to improve—*

4 “(1) *remote sensor capabilities, LiDAR capabili-*
5 *ties, optical gas imaging, magnetic survey technology,*
6 *and any other technologies relevant to the efficient*
7 *identification of abandoned wells;*

8 “(2) *understanding of how certain parameters of*
9 *abandoned wells affect methane emission rates of such*
10 *wells, including paramaters such as well age, well*
11 *depth, geology, construction, case material, and geo-*
12 *graphic region;*

13 “(3) *the efficiency and cost-efficacy of processes*
14 *for plugging, remediating, reclaiming, and*
15 *repurposing abandoned wells, including—*

16 “(A) *improvement of processes and tech-*
17 *nologies for the unique challenges associated with*
18 *plugging remote abandoned wells;*

19 “(B) *use of low carbon, lightweight cement*
20 *or use of alternative materials and additives for*
21 *plugging purposes; and*

22 “(C) *repurposing of abandoned wells for al-*
23 *ternative uses, including geothermal power pro-*
24 *duction or carbon capture, utilization, and stor-*
25 *age; and*

1 “(4) *understanding of the impacts of abandoned*
2 *wells on groundwater quality and contamination.*

3 “(c) *COORDINATION.—In carrying out the program es-*
4 *tablished under subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure*
5 *coordination of these activities with State and local govern-*
6 *ments, institutions of higher education, the Department of*
7 *Energy National Laboratories, the private sector, and im-*
8 *pacted communities, including landowners within such*
9 *communities.*

10 “(d) *ABANDONED WELL DEFINED.—In this section,*
11 *the term ‘abandoned well’ means a well originally drilled*
12 *in connection with oil and gas operations that is not being*
13 *used, has not been plugged, and has no anticipated use in*
14 *oil and gas operations.*

15 “(e) *FUNDING.—There is authorized to be appro-*
16 *priated to the Secretary to carry out this section amounts*
17 *authorized pursuant to section 10771 of subtitle O of title*
18 *VI of the Research and Development, Competition, and In-*
19 *novation Act (enacted as division B of Public Law 117–*
20 *167), as follows:*

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 (2) *in the table of contents in section 1(b) (42*
4 *U.S.C. 15801 note), by inserting after the matter re-*
5 *lating to section 969D the following new item:*

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

6 (b) *CONFORMING AMENDMENT*.—*Paragraph (6) of sec-*
7 *tion 10771 of subtitle O of title VI of the Research and De-*
8 *velopment, Competition, and Innovation Act (enacted as di-*
9 *vision B of Public Law 117–167) is amended—*

10 (1) *in the matter preceding subparagraph (A),*
11 *by striking “2026” and inserting “2028”;*

12 (2) *in subparagraph (A), by striking*
13 *“\$600,000,000” and inserting “\$507,500,000”;*

14 (3) *in subparagraph (B), by striking “and” after*
15 *the semicolon;*

16 (4) *in subparagraph (C)—*

17 (A) *by striking “\$1,000,000,000” and in-*
18 *serting “\$930,000,000”; and*

19 (B) *by striking the period and inserting “;*
20 *and”;* and

21 (5) *by adding at the end the following new sub-*
22 *paragraph:*

23 “(D) *\$162,500,000 to carry out abandoned*
24 *wells research, development, and demonstration*

1 *activities under section 969E of the Energy Pol-*
2 *icy Act of 2005, in accordance with such sec-*
3 *tion.”.*

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