



[Home](#) > Biden-Harris Administration Delivers Nearly \$17...

Biden-Harris Administration Delivers Nearly \$17 Million from President Biden's Investing in America Agenda to Clean Up Legacy Pollution on Tribal Lands



Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investments continue to help Tribes plug orphaned oil and gas wells, combat climate change, and protect natural resources

09/19/2024

Last edited 09/19/2024

Date: Thursday, September 19, 2024

Contact: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

WASHINGTON— The Department of the Interior today announced a \$16.73 million investment through President Biden's Investing in America agenda to assist five Tribal Nations in cleaning up orphaned oil and gas wells on their homelands. This investment will support economic opportunities to address legacy pollution, reduce harmful methane leaks, and tackle environmental hazards that threaten Tribal communities. This builds on [\\$12 million](#) in grants announced last month by the Department and [\\$40 million](#) allocated last year.

“Ensuring that Tribal leaders have the opportunity to invest federal resources as needed is key to honoring Tribal sovereignty. Our administration is committed to reducing legacy pollution on Tribal lands, improving public health, and creating economic opportunities,” said **Secretary Deb Haaland**.

“Through the President's Investing in America agenda, we are making millions of dollars available for Tribes to strengthen capacity and realize their vision for vibrant, healthy and sustainable communities.”

Funding awarded today may be utilized to plug, remediate or reclaim orphaned wells on Tribal lands, restore soil and habitat in areas degraded due to orphaned wells, decommission or remove associated

infrastructure, identify and characterize additional undocumented wells on Tribal land, and set up well-plugging capacity where not already established.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a total of \$4.7 billion [to address orphaned wells](#) across the country, including \$150 million specifically for Tribal communities. Today's announcement brings the total nationwide investment in cleaning up orphaned wells on Tribal lands to more than \$68 million. Additional phase two Tribal grants will be awarded and announced on a rolling basis. Tribes may also [request direct assistance](#) from the Department, through "In Lieu of Grant" funding, to administer and carry out plugging, remediation and reclamation activities on the Tribe's behalf.

Orphaned oil and gas wells have the potential to jeopardize public health and safety by contaminating groundwater, seeping toxic chemicals, polluting drinking water sources, emitting dangerous pollutants, and harming wildlife. Methane leaking from many of these unplugged wells is a severe safety hazard, a significant cause of climate change, and more than 25 times as potent as carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere.

Today's awards fund two categories of activities. Implementation Grants support plugging, remediation, and reclamation activities at orphaned well sites on Tribal lands, including pre-plugging assessments, removal of contaminants from soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediment, and restoring resources degraded by orphaned wells or associated pipelines, facilities, and infrastructure. Program Development Grants support capacity-building activities that help Tribal recipients prepare for future plugging, remediation, and reclamation activities. Program Development funding assists Tribes in locating, inventorying, and assessing orphaned wells and in amplifying Tribal capacity and expertise through job creation, training, and administrative support.

This effort advances the President's [Justice40 Initiative](#) that sets a goal to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to historically disadvantaged communities that have been marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

Tribal Phase 2 Projects

Chickasaw Nation - \$499,993 Implementation Grant

Building on assessment activities completed under a Phase 1 award, this project will evaluate ten additional well sites, compile and analyze data, develop plugging standards and guidelines for measuring and tracking methane emissions and soil and water contamination, continue site visits and environmental reviews, and train Tribal staff in a comprehensive program of orphaned well site management and remediation.

Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy Reservation - \$2,006,533 Implementation Grant

This project will complete plugging, remediation, and reclamation of the 17 orphaned wells sites identified and assessed with Phase 1 grant funding. Site remediation and reclamation activities include

the removal of any residual contaminants and replanting native vegetation to recover the natural habitat.

Comanche Nation - \$1,000,000 Program Development Grant

This project will establish a Tribal orphaned wells program to address the environmental and economic challenges posed by orphaned wells on Tribal lands. The project will evaluate 23 documented and approximately 250 potentially orphaned wells. Funds will support training for Tribal members in skilled plugging-related jobs, such as methane monitoring, that will be needed in future program implementation phases.

Jicarilla Apache Nation - \$3,162,500 Implementation Grant

This project will evaluate and prioritize identified orphaned wells, inspect each location to estimate current contamination of surface water, groundwater, and measure current emissions of methane and other gases, and plug, remediate, reclaim up to 19 orphaned well sites and adjacent lands.

Osage Nation - \$10,059,548 Implementation Grant

This project will support and expand the Tribe's plugging, remediation, and reclamation program. Funds will support Tribal staff hired and trained under Phase 1 funding to implement prioritized plugging and remediation activities at up to 91 orphaned well sites.

###

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

01/10/2025

Biden-Harris Administration Delivers Nearly \$16 Million from President Biden's Investing in America...

12/20/2024

Interior and Defense Departments Invest \$15 Million to Preserve Green Spaces, Enhance Recreation...

[Read More](#)

[Read More](#)

PRESS RELEASE

12/17/2024

**Secretary Haaland Designates 19 New
National Historic Landmarks**

[Read More](#)

Was this page helpful?

Yes No

[Submit](#)

[Return to top](#)

 **SUBSCRIBE**

Enter your email address to subscribe to Interior news and updates

[Sign Up](#)

[About DOI](#)

[Accessibility](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Disclaimer](#)

[Information Quality](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Vulnerability Disclosure Policy](#)

[Budget & Performance](#)

[Coronavirus Updates](#)

[Cummings Act Notices](#)

[Diversity, Inclusion & Civil Rights](#)

[FOIA](#)

[Inspector General](#)

[No Fear Act reports](#)



U.S. Department of the Interior

Stewarding Conservation and Powering Our Future



1849 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20240