



[Home](#) > Interior Department Releases Draft Guidance For...

Interior Department Releases Draft Guidance for States to Access up to \$1.5 Billion from President Biden's Investing in America Agenda to Address Legacy Pollution

Share

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests an overall \$4.7 billion for orphaned well clean-up

02/23/2024

Last edited 02/23/2024

Date: Friday, February 23, 2024

Contact: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

WASHINGTON — The Department of the Interior today released [draft guidance](#) to states on how to apply for up to \$30 million each in matching grant funding available under President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to create jobs and clean up polluting and unsafe orphaned oil and gas wells across the country. Investments to date through the Department's [Orphaned Wells Program Office](#), created by this historic law, are estimated to have supported 7,213 jobs and contributed over \$900 million across the country.

"The Department of the Interior is moving quickly to implement this once-in-a-generation investment in tackling legacy pollution, provided through President Biden's Investing in America agenda. These investments are good for our climate, for the health of our communities, and for American workers," said **Secretary Deb Haaland**. "Addressing orphaned wells cuts methane emissions, advances environmental justice and creates jobs. This effort reflects the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to a healthier planet and equitable growth."

[Orphaned oil and gas wells](#) are polluting backyards, recreation areas, and community spaces across the country. Methane leaking from many of these unplugged wells is a serious safety hazard and is a significant cause of climate change, being more than 25 times as potent as carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere.

Under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, several types of funding are available for states, Tribes and the federal government to access a total of \$4.7 billion to address orphaned wells across the country. To date, \$645 million in grant funding has been allocated from the Department to 25 states, including initial grants to help inventory and assess states' needs. This announcement also advances environmental justice and President Biden's Justice40 Initiative which set the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal climate, clean energy, and other covered investments flow to disadvantaged communities. As of December 31, states have plugged approximately 7,000 wells located on state and private lands.

As part of the orphaned well program, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$1.5 billion for state performance grants, which fall into two categories: Matching Grants and Regulatory Improvement Grants. Eligible states may receive a Matching Grant from the Department equal to what the state commits to spend each fiscal year if that amount is greater than the average spent by the state between 2010 and 2019. By incentivizing states to increase their own spending on plugging and reclaiming orphaned wells, these grants will help address the thousands of orphaned wells across the country that pollute groundwater, threaten local communities and contribute to climate change. In the coming months, information will be made available on how states can apply for Regulatory Improvement Grants.

In addition to providing historic funding to states, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law allocated \$250 million to [clean up well sites](#) in national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and other public lands, nearly \$150 million of which has been allocated over the past three years. This funding for states and federal land managers is in addition to the close to [\\$40 million announced](#) for Tribal communities in September 2023, marking a comprehensive effort by the Biden Administration to revitalize American lands and waters.

The public and stakeholders are invited to submit comments on the draft guidance, via email, to orphanedwells@ios.doi.gov, by 11:59 PM PT on March 22, 2024. Comments will be instrumental in refining the program's direction.

###

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

12/16/2024

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$109 Million from Investing in America Agenda to Clean Up...

[Read More](#)

10/01/2024

Biden-Harris Administration Releases Draft Guidance for States to Access up to \$1.5 Billion from...

[Read More](#)

PRESS RELEASE

09/19/2024

Biden-Harris Administration Delivers Nearly \$17 Million from President Biden's Investing in America...

[Read More](#)

Was this page helpful?

Yes No

[Submit](#)

[Return to top](#)

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