

---

April 29, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
304 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
304 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

Western Governors write to communicate our support for legislation to support states' cleanup activities on abandoned and orphaned oil and gas wells and associated sites. Many western states are currently engaged in oil and gas well plugging and remediation activities, and this work could be significantly accelerated with federal assistance. Western Governors are also keenly focused on advancing employment opportunities for workers affected by energy sector transitions, and these cleanup efforts provide valuable opportunities for states across the West to promote high-paying jobs.

Western Governors' Association (WGA) Policy Resolution [2018-04, Energy in the West](#), communicates Western Governors' collective priorities to "[p]rotect western wildlife, natural resources, and the environment, including clean air and clean water, and strive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions." Legislation that would augment states' ability to address abandoned and orphaned oil and gas well backlogs, as well as create economic opportunity for energy sector workers, clearly meets these stated goals.

The economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the energy sector have heightened the need for additional resources to address this challenge. Due to COVID-19 mitigation measures and rapid changes in global oil and gas markets, western states experienced a surge in the number of orphaned wells located within our borders. Your support of legislation to improve and expand resources available for cleaning up abandoned and orphaned oil and gas wells and associated sites will lead to measurable environmental improvements and provide needed economic support to communities still overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are prepared and eager to work with you on this important legislation. Thank you for your leadership on this matter.

Sincerely,



Kate Brown  
Governor of Oregon  
Chair, WGA



Brad Little  
Governor of Idaho  
Vice Chair, WGA

Attachment