

# Orphan well regulations proposed for BC

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The BC government has announced legislation regarding orphan well sites.

The announced legislation, Bill 15, the Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Statutes Amendment Act, 2018, will amend the Oil and Gas Activities Act and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Act.

The OGAA amendments will replace the existing tax structure with a levy to be paid into BC's Orphan Site Reclamation Fund, which goes toward orphan site restoration and environmental cleanup. The levy will be set by the BC Oil and Gas Commission board.

Proposed amendments will force permit holders to perform restoration work on inactive sites, with hopes to reduce the number of orphan sites.

The BC Oil and Gas Commission board will also be able to deny permits on the basis on previous non-compliance, and permits will be transferable for the purpose of starting new activity or restoration work.

Other amendments deal with safety, like allowing the commission to establish roadblocks in cases of emergency and recover costs from the permit holder.

"We are taking action to deal with the growing number of orphaned well sites by cleaning them up, as well as preventing this from happening in the future," said Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Michelle Mungall. "Industry will continue to be responsible for their activities, as we provide additional tools for the BC Oil and Gas Commission to protect the environment."

To go in effect, it will need to be approved by legislature.

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