



California
Department of Conservation
Geologic Energy Management Division

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7/8/2025

Stanislaus County
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Assessor Parcel Number(s): 044-039-001, 044-039-002
Property Owner(s): N/A
Project Location Address: 3426 South Commons Road, Turlock, CA
95380

Project Title: SCH 2025030780 - PLN2025-0011 – Couco Creek

Public Resources Code (PRC) § 3208.1 establishes re-abandonment responsibility when previously plugged and abandoned oil, gas or geothermal wells will be impacted by planned property development or construction activities. Local permitting agencies, property owners, and/or developers should be aware of, and fully understand, that significant and potentially dangerous issues may be associated with development near previously abandoned oil, gas, and geothermal wells.

The California Geologic Energy Management Division (CalGEM) has received the above-referenced project dated 06/13/2025. To assist local permitting agencies, property owners, and developers in making safe and practical land use decisions regarding potential development near oil, gas, or geothermal wells, the Division provides a table of the wells within the parcel boundary or in its vicinity, based on the Division's Well Finder database (link found at the bottom of this letter).

The Division categorically advises against building over, or in any way impeding access to, oil, gas, or geothermal wells. Impeding access to a well could result in the need to remove any structure or obstacle that prevents or impedes access including, but not limited to, buildings,

housing, fencing, landscaping, trees, pools, patios, sidewalks, roadways, and decking at the landowner's expense if there is a need to access a well. Maintaining sufficient access is considered the ability for a well servicing unit and associated necessary equipment (consisting of well servicing rig, pumping equipment, pipe trailer) to reach a well from a public street or access way, solely over the parcel on which the well is located. A well servicing unit, and any necessary equipment, should be able to pass unimpeded along and over the route, and should be able to access the well without disturbing the integrity of surrounding infrastructure. Impermeable barriers such as asphalt, concrete, and plastic may trap hazardous gases and liquids underneath and could create a safety hazard if built over a well that later develops a leak.

The Division recommends that any well for which access is impeded or built over, against the Division's advice, should be evaluated by a qualified petroleum professional for compliance with the statutory objectives of isolating all hydrocarbon-bearing strata; protecting underground and surface waters; prevention of subsequent damage to life, health, property, and other resources; and prevention of loss of oil, gas, or reservoir energy. The Division recommends that wells that do not meet these standards are abandoned or re-abandoned prior to construction. The well information can be accessed through <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/doggr/wellfinder/>. PRC § 3208, subdivision (a), provides the primary statutory authority for the Division to oversee adequate abandonment of wells. Additionally, the Division has developed the regulatory guidance for operators to be followed during well abandonment, which are listed within California Code of Regulation, title 14 (CCR) § 1723 and associated sub-sections (for onshore wells), and § 1745 and associated sub-sections (for offshore wells).

There is no guarantee that a well abandoned in compliance with current Division requirements as prescribed by law will not start leaking in the future. Due to the inability to predict all subsurface conditions or changes, it always remains a possibility that any well may start to leak oil, gas, and/or water after abandonment, no matter how thoroughly the well was plugged and abandoned. The Division acknowledges wells plugged and abandoned to the most current Division requirements as prescribed by law have a lower probability of leaking in the future, however there is no guarantee that such abandoned wells will not leak.

The Division advises that all wells identified on the development parcel prior to, or during, development activities be tested for liquid and gas leakage. Surveyed locations in Latitude and Longitude, NAD 83 decimal format, and leak testing results should be provided to the Division. The Division expects any wells found leaking to be reported to the Division immediately.

PRC § 3208.1 gives the Division the authority to order or permit the re-abandonment of any well where it has reason to question the integrity of the previous abandonment. Responsibility for re-abandonment costs may be affected by the choices made by the local permitting agency,

property owner, and/or developer in considering the general advice set forth in this letter. The PRC continues to define the person or entity responsible for re-abandonment as:

1. The property owner - If the well was plugged and abandoned in conformance with Division requirements at the time of abandonment, and in its current condition does not pose an immediate danger to life, health, and property, but requires additional work solely because the owner of the property on which the well is located proposes construction on the property that would prevent or impede access to the well for purposes of remedying a currently perceived future problem, then the owner of the property on which the well is located shall obtain all rights necessary to re-abandon the well and be responsible for the re-abandonment.
2. The person or entity causing construction over or near the well - If the well was plugged and abandoned in conformance with Division requirements at the time of plugging and abandonment, and the property owner, developer, or local agency permitting the construction failed either to obtain an opinion from the supervisor or district deputy as to whether the previously abandoned well is required to be re-abandoned, or to follow the advice of the supervisor or district deputy not to undertake construction that impedes access, then the person or entity causing the construction over or near the well shall obtain all rights necessary to re-abandon the well and be responsible for the re-abandonment.
3. The party or parties responsible for disturbing the integrity of the abandonment - If the well was plugged and abandoned in conformance with Division requirements at the time of plugging and abandonment, and after that time someone other than the operator or an affiliate of the operator disturbed the integrity of the abandonment in the course of developing the property, then the party or parties responsible for disturbing the integrity of the abandonment shall be responsible for the re-abandonment.

Should any wells require abandonment or re-abandonment, the responsible party must submit a Notice of Intention (NOI) to the Division through WellSTAR. The NOI form can be accessed in the 'Plugging and Abandonment' section of the following link: https://www.conservation.ca.gov/calgem/for_operators. No well work may be performed on any oil, gas, or geothermal well without written approval from the Division. Well work requiring approval includes, but is not limited to, mitigating leaking gas or other fluids from abandoned wells, modifications to well casings, and/or any other re-abandonment work. The Division also regulates the top of a plugged and abandoned well's minimum and maximum depth below final grade. CCR §1723.5 states well casings shall be cut off at least 5 feet but no more than 10 feet below the surface of the ground. If any well needs to be lowered or raised (i.e. casing cut down or casing riser added) to meet this regulation, a permit from the Division is required before work can start.

The Division makes the following additional recommendations to the local permitting agency, property owner, and developer:

1. To ensure that present and future property owners are aware of (a) the existence of all wells located on the property, and (b) potentially significant issues associated with any improvements near oil or gas wells, the Division recommends that information regarding the above identified well(s), and any other pertinent information obtained after the issuance of this letter, be communicated to the appropriate county recorder for inclusion in the title information of the subject real property.
2. The Division recommends that any soil containing hydrocarbons be disposed of in accordance with local, state, and federal laws. Please notify the appropriate authorities if soil containing significant amounts of hydrocarbons is discovered during development.

As indicated in PRC § 3106, the Division has statutory authority over the drilling, operation, maintenance, and abandonment of oil, gas, and geothermal wells, and attendant facilities, to prevent, as far as possible, damage to life, health, property, and natural resources; damage to underground oil, gas, and geothermal deposits; and damage to underground and surface waters suitable for irrigation or domestic purposes. In addition to the Division's authority to order work on wells pursuant to PRC §§ 3208.1 and 3224, it has authority to issue civil and criminal penalties under PRC §§ 3236, 3236.5, and 3359 for violations within the Division's jurisdictional authority. The Division does not regulate grading, excavations, or other land use issues.

Should you have any questions, or if any wells are encountered that were not part of this letter, contact CalGEM at 916-322-1110 or via email at CalGEMNorthern@conservation.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

May Soe

May Soe
Supervising Oil and Gas Engineer – Northern District

cc: Emily DeAnda – Associate Planner

The wells listed below are reported to be located within and nearby the parcel boundary, and may have future access impeded:

No wells in the project area.