State of California Natural Resources Agency / Department of Conservation GEOLOGIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT DIVISION

California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation **From:** Department of Conservation State Clearinghouse 715 P Street, MS 1803
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95814

Sacramento, CA 95814 **Contact:** CEQA@conservation.ca.gov

Project Title: State Abandonment of Orphan Wells Project – Oxnard Saticoy Simi

Project Applicant: Department of Conservation, Geologic Energy Management Division

Project Location: Oxnard Oil Field, Simi Oil Field, and Saticoy Oil Field, Ventura County, CA

Project Description: The proposed project consists of the plug and abandonment (P&A) of 12 existing orphan wells in Ventura County as part of CalGEM's State Abandonment Program. The proposed work involves well abandonment and decommissioning tanks and other production-related facilities attendant to the wells, if present. For well abandonment, each well will be cleaned out and then plugged with cement and inert mud to surface. After abandonment, the well head will be removed, and any remaining well casings and surface conductors will be cut to just above the bay floor. Once the well bay is clean, it will have suitable fill placed and compacted. The well bay will be encapsulated with impermeable concrete to seal the bay area. These wells are situated on private lands, in both rural and urban areas.

CalGEM has approved a task order for its contractor to perform the proposed work on the wells listed below. Notices of Intention will be issued to the contractor for administrative purposes only and do not constitute a discretionary approval.

API#	Lat/Lon
0411121463	34.28305054, -119.12979889
0411121263	34.27701950, -119.12522125
0411121953	34.20228958, -119.10636902
0411121951	34.20228958, -119.10644531
0411121950	34.20257187, -119.10649872
0411121946	34.20257187, -119.10643005
0411121945	34.20255661, -119.10688782
0411121942	34.20256805, -119.10681152
0411121931	34.20235062, -119.10678101
0411121930	34.20236588, -119.10692596
0411100125	34.29875183, -118.72109222

API#	Lat/Lon	
0411100126	34.298592, -118.721825	

Exempt Status: As the Lead Agency, CalGEM has determined that the proposed project is exempt from full environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), pursuant to the specified exemptions marked in the section below. CalGEM further finds that the proposed project would not result in a significant adverse impact to the environment, or that any of the exceptions to the application of the exemptions apply (14 CCR § 15300.2).

Exemption Type			Statute (PRC)	Regulation (14 CCR)			
	Statutory Exemption:						
		Ongoing Project (pre-CEQA approval on April 5, 1973)	21169	15261 (b)			
		Ministerial	21080 (b)(1)	15268			
		Declared Emergency	21080 (b)(3)	15269 (a)			
		Emergency Projects	21080 (b)(4)	15269 (b) or (c)			
V	Categorical Exemption:		21084				
	\checkmark	Class 1: Existing Facilities		15301	1684.1		
		Class 2: Replacement or Reconstruction		15302			
		Class 3: New Construction/Conversion of Small Structures		15303			
		Class 4: Minor Alterations to Land		15304	1684.2		
	$\overline{\checkmark}$	Class 7: Protection of Natural Resources		15307			
	$\overline{\checkmark}$	Class 8: Protection of the Environment		15308			
		Class 11: Accessory Structures		15311			
		Class 21: Enforcement Actions to revoke a permit		15321			
		Class 30: Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate, or Eliminate a Release (Actual or Threat) of Hazardous Substances (Waste or Material)		15330			
		Class 33: Small Habitat Restoration Projects		15333			
	General Exemption ("common sense")			15061 (b)(3)			
	Not a	"Project" subject to CEQA		15378 (b)(2)			
CEQA Exceptions to the Exemptions (14 CCR § 15300.2): where project is located (e.g., sensitive environment); Cumulative Impact; Significant Effect due to Unusual Circumstances; Scenic Highways; Hazardous Waste Sites; Historical Resources.							

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: The basis for CalGEM's determination that the project is exempt from the requirements of CEQA is provided in the brief explanation below.

Class 1, Existing Facilities (14 CCR §§ 15301, 1684.1): Class 1 exemption applies as CalGEM's regulations state: "Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, or

minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing previously. The Class includes, but is not limited to: remedial, maintenance, conversion, and abandonment work on oil, gas, injection, and geothermal wells...". These abandonments could be considered a minor alteration to the existing facilities because the existing wells will be permanently sealed. After abandonment, the wells will cease to be used for oil and gas activities. Therefore, there would be no expansion of use beyond that previously existing.

Class 7 and Class 8, Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources and the Environment (14 CCR §§ 15307, 15308): Orphan wells, due to their inherent lack of maintenance and open pipe to potential reservoir pressure and fluids, present an increased risk for potential leaks that could affect and impact natural resources and environment in the area. In addition, because some of the wells are within 3,200 feet of residences, the increased risk of leaks of hazardous substances could negatively impact surrounding sensitive receptors. Orphan wells present an increased risk of leaks when compared to a properly abandoned well and therefore must be plugged and abandoned to minimize a potential threat of a release and subsequent impact. Abandonment of these orphan wells would ensure that risks from leaks and potential impacts to the natural resources and environment are minimized to the extent feasible and therefore the Class 7 and Class 8 exemptions are potentially applicable.

Exceptions to Exemptions: CalGEM further finds that there are no exceptions to the application of the categorical exemptions (PRC § 21084; 14 CCR § 15300.2) referenced above. For example, there is no substantial evidence that there are any "unusual circumstances" associated with the proposed project that create a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment, and that there are no significant "cumulative impacts" resulting from successive projects of the same type in the same place. Therefore, reliance on the exemptions is appropriate.

A copy of this NOE (as required by 14 CCR § 15062(a)) and all other related materials can be made available to the public by contacting the CalGEM CEQA Program, located at 715 P Street, MS 1803, Sacramento, CA 95814; by calling (916) 445-9686; or an electronic copy of these documents may be requested by contacting CEQA@conservation.ca.gov. The notice filed with the State Clearinghouse may be accessed online at: https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov

Certified: Sireg Chittick Date: 5/7/2025

Department of Conservation,
Geologic Energy Management Division