

Addressing Legacy Pollution:

Interior Funding Programs to Clean Up Orphaned Wells & Abandoned Coal Mine Lands



U.S. Department of Energy Virtual Workshop:
Capacity Building for Energy Assets

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What is Legacy Pollution & What Funding is Available to Address It?

- Millions of Americans across the country live within just one mile from an abandoned coal mine or an orphaned oil or gas well
- These legacy pollution sites are environmental hazards and jeopardize public health and safety
- The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's (BIL) \$16 billion historic investment is going directly toward reclaiming abandoned coal mine lands (AML) and plugging and reclaiming orphaned oil and gas wells
- Impact: Making communities safer, cleaning up the environment, and creating good-paying jobs to strengthen local economies
- Orphaned Wells: \$4.7 billion available to DOI until Sept. 30, 2030
- Abandoned Mine Lands:
 - BIL AML
 - Fee-based AML
 - Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER)



AML damage in West Newton, PA



An orphaned well in WV before plugging



BIL AML Funding

- \$11.3 billion over 15 years (FY2022 through FY2036)
 - Roughly \$725 million available each fiscal year to eligible states and Tribes (22 states and the Navajo Nation)
- More than \$1.7 billion dollars in BIL AML funding has been awarded since the start of the program
- Will allow us to address the majority of currently inventoried AML problems
- Historic level of funding = addressing problems previously unfeasible due to cost or scale
- BIL AML funds are not direct funds: DOI-OSMRE distributes \$ to the states and tribes; they select and carry out the reclamation work
- Preference encouraged for employing current and former coal workers on BIL projects



Other AML Funding Programs

Fee-based AML:

- Title IV of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA) created the AML Fund
- Fees are paid by present-day coal mining companies into the AML fund to reclaim coal mines abandoned before 1977. Companies pay a per-ton fee to OSMRE
- Distributed to eligible states and Tribes based on a formula (including historic coal production)

Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER):

- Funding goes to the six Appalachian states with the highest amount of high priority AML and the three tribes with AML Programs
 - Kentucky, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Alabama, Ohio, Virginia, the Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, and the Crow Tribe
- Focus: Projects that create economic/community development on or adjacent to eligible abandoned mine land



eKAMI , Paintsville, KY



Remnants of former coal mining at eKAMI

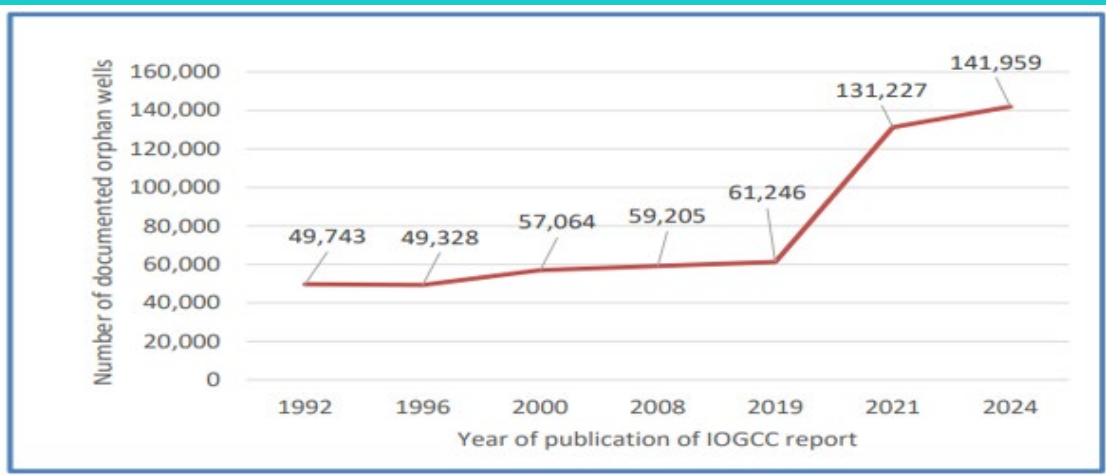
What is an Orphaned Well?

According to the BIL (Sec. 40601(a)(5))

The term “orphaned well”, with respect to Federal or Tribal land, means a well that is not used for an authorized purpose, such as production, injection, or monitoring, and for which no operator can be located, the operator of which is unable to plug the well and to remediate and reclaim the well site, or that is in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

With respect to State or private land, the term:

- (1) has the meaning given the term by the applicable State; or
- (2) if that State uses different terminology, has the meaning given another term used by the State to describe a well eligible for plugging, remediation, and reclamation by the State.



Trend in State Reporting of Documented Orphaned Wells

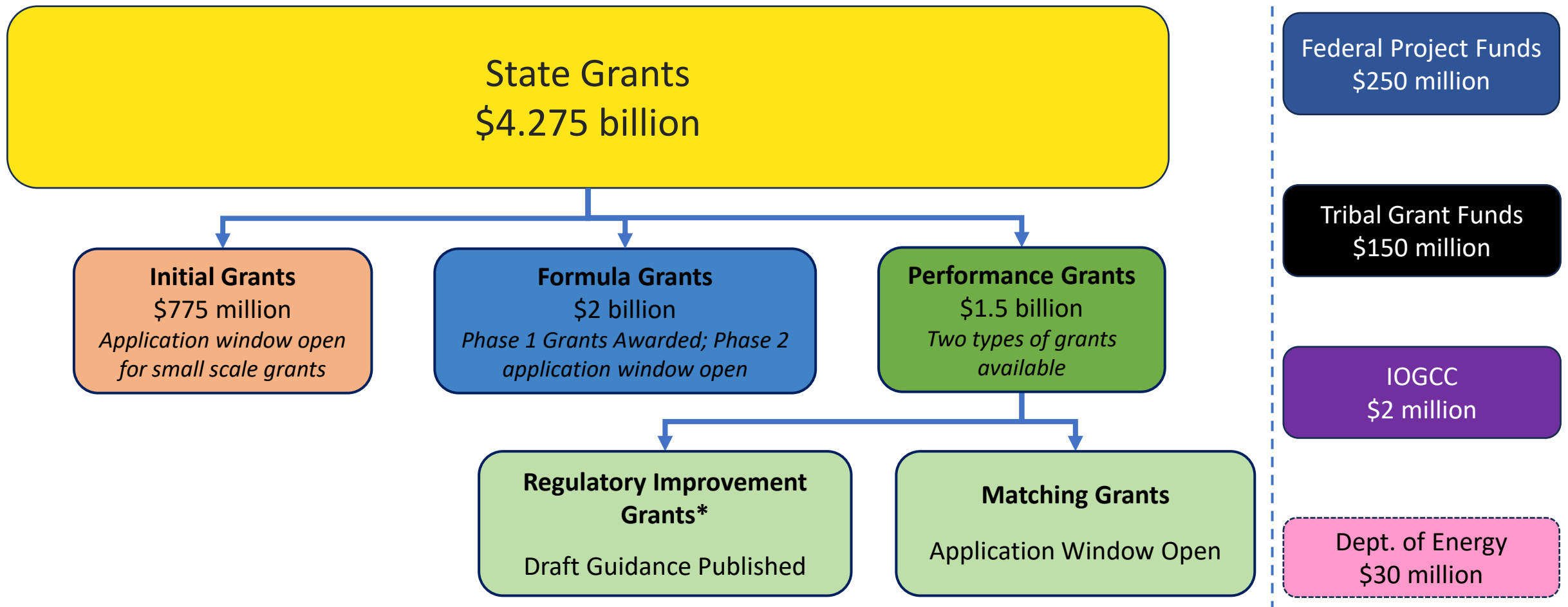


The BIL's Orphaned Wells Program

Division D, Title VI -- Methane Reduction Infrastructure

Section 40601: Orphaned well site plugging, remediation, and restoration

\$4.677 billion appropriated by Congress and available to DOI until 9.30.30



Funds Released and Work Accomplished So Far

\$1.087B

Awarded to 25 states and being monitored in initial, formula, and performance grants (as of 11/14/24)

 **~ 9,003**

Wells plugged and abandoned on state, private, and federal lands (as of 6/30/24)

\$148M

Distributed to federal partners for well plugging, remediation and restoration on federal land

 **~ 155K**

Metric tons of CO₂e emissions prevented annually (as of 6/30/24)

\$68M

Awarded for Tribal implementation and development grants for orphaned well activities (as of 11/14/24)

 **...**

Tribes are completing the requirements to begin plugging work



Thank you!

If you have additional questions:

Sara Cawley, Senior Advisor, ASLM

Sara_Cawley@ios.doi.gov

Peter Gallagher, Senior Advisor, Orphan Wells

peter_gallagher@ios.doi.gov