



Leslyn Lewis
Member of Parliament
Haldimand—Norfolk



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

2022-04-05

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
Minister of Natural Resources
580 Booth Street, 21st Floor, Room: C7-1
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E4
HonJonathan.Wilkinson@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca

Dear Minister,

I am writing to bring to your attention a very concerning environmental and public health issue in Ontario. While estimates vary, it is conservatively estimated that there are up to 10,000 abandoned oil and gas wells in Ontario and up to 4,500 abandoned wells in my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk alone. In fact, Haldimand-Norfolk has one of the highest concentrations of orphan wells in the country. The wells, which can emit an odious sulphuric smell and can damage surrounding water and air quality, are posing an ongoing environmental and public health risk to residents.

In 2020, your government announced it was allocating \$1.7 billion to cleaning up orphan wells in Alberta, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Yet, even though Ontario has thousands of orphan wells of its own, this province has seemingly been left out of this plan. The Ontario Petroleum Institute wrote to the Minister of Finance almost two years ago, in May 2020, asking for \$270 million in funding for an Ontario Orphan Well Reclamation Program, estimating the clean-up cost per well at \$60,000.

Not only would action from your government on this file support the government's long-time public commitment to environmental priorities, as the OPI has noted, there are economic opportunities to explore that would create jobs and partnerships with the private sector to serve communities across Ontario going forward. The provincial government is ready to do the work to help remediate these wells, but they cannot do so without partnership from the federal government.

I would like to request that your office provide me with a timely response regarding your department's plans to work with the Ontario Government to address the orphan well problem in Haldimand-Norfolk and across the province.

Sincerely,

Leslyn Lewis
Member of Parliament, Haldimand-Norfolk

CC: Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Hon. Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
Greg McLean, Shadow Minister for Natural Resources
Kyle Seeback, Shadow Minister for Environment and Climate Change

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