



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

ECRP/7302

Ms. Sharon Block
Acting Administrator
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Ms. Block:

Pursuant to Office of Management and Budget (OMB) procedures established at 5 C.F.R. Part 1320, Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public, I request that the proposed information collection, the Orphaned Well State Grant Workplans, OMB Control No. 1093-NEW, be processed as an Emergency Clearance Request per 5 C.F.R. §1320.13, Emergency Processing.

Pub. L. 117-58, Section 40601 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) designates the Secretary of the Interior as the key agency responsible for implementing a grant program for all States to plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned wells located on State and private lands. This investment will rebuild America's critical infrastructure, tackle the climate crisis, advance environmental justice, and drive the creation of good-paying union jobs. To implement grant funds, the U.S. Department of Interior needs to collect information from States, including the following information in a consolidated workplan: an overview of their orphaned well program, proposed budget justification with estimates for work centers, how the State determines a well is orphaned, and the process to collect on financial assurance from potentially responsible parties, a description of their prioritization process for ranking orphan wells, how the State manages access to private lands, a summary of well locations and proximity to human population demographics, a summary of proposed fieldwork with an estimate of wells to plugged, a work schedule, and management of indirect costs. The collection of this information is necessary to ensure that grant funds are being used per the BIL and Federal Assistance requirements under 2 CFR 200.

I have determined that this information must be collected before the timelines established under Part 1320 of the regulations and that this information is essential to meet the timelines specified in BIL.¹ The use of normal clearance processes is likely to prevent or disrupt the information necessary to evaluate the State's orphan well programs and delay the distribution of funds, as required by the BIL. The information collected in the workplan will not be a public burden as

¹ See Pub. L. 117-58, Section 40601(a)(b)(1): Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the Secretary shall establish a program to plug, remediate, and reclaim orphaned wells located on Federal land.

States are aware this information is needed to distribute funds under the Orphan Well Program. As this request for approval concerns the timeline of the Orphan Well Program, the Department of Interior is also seeking OMB's approval to waive the need for the Federal Register Notices otherwise required by 5 C.F.R. 1320.5(a)(1)(iv) and 1320.8(d)(1) before publication and implementation of this disclosure.

We would appreciate if you could please provide an approval/disapproval determination of this request to collect information under an emergency clearance by close of business on Friday, April 1, 2022.

Sincerely,

Eric Werwa
Deputy Assistant Secretary -
Policy and Environmental Management