



California Oil & Gas Regulator Has New Name, Focus

SACRAMENTO – Effective January 1, 2020, California’s regulatory entity for oil, gas, and geothermal production has an updated focus and a new name: the [California Geologic Energy Management Division \(CalGEM\)](#).

Housed within the California Department of Conservation, CalGEM replaces the Division of Oil, Gas, and Geothermal Resources (DOGGR). This change comes as a result of Assembly Bill 1057 (Assemblymember Limón, D-Santa Barbara), which was signed by Governor Newsom on October 12, 2019.

“This division began in 1915, when the focus was on the development and production of petroleum resources,” DOC Director David Shabazian said. “This mission has since evolved, and protection of public health, safety, and the environment is a heightened priority. As we continue to focus on this enhanced priority, we are also helping to guide the broader transition to a low-carbon future.”

In addition to changing the division’s name and elevating the focus on health, safety, and the environment, the legislation:

- Requires CalGEM to reduce and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions associated with the development of hydrocarbon and geothermal resources in a manner that meets the energy needs of the state.
- Provides CalGEM the authority to require increased financial assurances from onshore operators if existing assurances are inadequate.
- Mandates additional documentation from operators when ownership of wells or facilities changes, such as proof of sale and lease agreements.

“We will continue to focus on ensuring compliance with California’s laws and regulations while increasing our health, safety, and environmental efforts,” said Uduak-Joe Ntuk, State Supervisor of Oil and Gas. “Concurrently, we will oversee energy production in a manner that aligns with the state’s clean energy and climate goals.”

Oil became a commercial commodity in California in the mid-1850s. The Los Angeles City oil field was discovered in 1893, and many other significant fields in Kern County were producing by 1910.

California established CalGEM’s predecessor in 1915 to permit the drilling, operation, and closure of oil and gas wells, and to track information about production. CalGEM is the repository of more than 170,000 well records, production and injection statistics, well logs, and field maps. The standards for permanently closing old wells – an important step in protecting drinking and agricultural water – have become more protective over the years.

California remains one of the country’s largest oil-producing states, but production has declined dramatically since 1985, when the state’s fields produced 424 million barrels. A preliminary report for 2018 puts California’s production at 161.8 million barrels.

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