



TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE
COMMISSIONER DAWN BUCKINGHAM, M.D.

1700 N. Congress Ave. • Austin, TX 78701-1495 • 512-463-5339 • FAX: 512-475-1415

PRESS RELEASE

Commissioner Buckingham Prioritizes Coastal Protection - Allocates \$10 Million to Plug Abandoned Wells in Trinity Bay

Plugging these wells will ensure the safety of Texans, wildlife, and ecosystems in the area

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 06, 2023

Contact: Kimberly Hubbard
(512) 936-9582
media@glo.texas.gov

Austin — Today, Texas Land Commissioner Dawn Buckingham, M.D. announced the allocation of \$10 million from the Texas General Land Office's (GLO) Surface Damage Account to be used for the plugging of orphaned oil and gas wells in Trinity Bay in Chambers County, Texas.

"As someone who was raised near the coast and lived in Galveston for over a decade, I am committed to safeguarding our shoreline and ensuring the stewardship of our coastal lands, habitats, and ecosystems they support," said Commissioner Buckingham. "This partnership with the Railroad Commission is vital, and I am thankful our agency was able to provide resources for this significant project of safely plugging these wells."



One example of an abandoned well in Trinity Bay

The Texas General Land Office entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Railroad Commission (RRC) to provide \$10 million in funding for the plugging of these abandoned wells. Unplugged wells can prove to be an environmental hazard, and the forty-seven wells in Trinity Bay pose the most risk to wildlife in the area.

The GLO is committed to providing support for orphan well plugging in Trinity Bay. While the RRC is the state agency with the authority to plug wells, the GLO is responsible for ensuring prevention and response to oil spills in the state's coastal bay systems. Additionally, the GLO stands ready to support the removal of aging infrastructure that contributes to coastal oil spills.

The total amount of \$10 million granted to the RRC from the GLO to plug the wells is drawn from an account funded in part by the oil and gas industry for reclamation purposes on Permanent Fund School (PSF) properties, such as Trinity Bay. The PSF is a constitutionally created fund that benefits public schools in Texas. The royalties paid for oil and natural gas production on PSF lands are deposited into the fund.

#