

Idle and Orphan Oil and Gas Wells

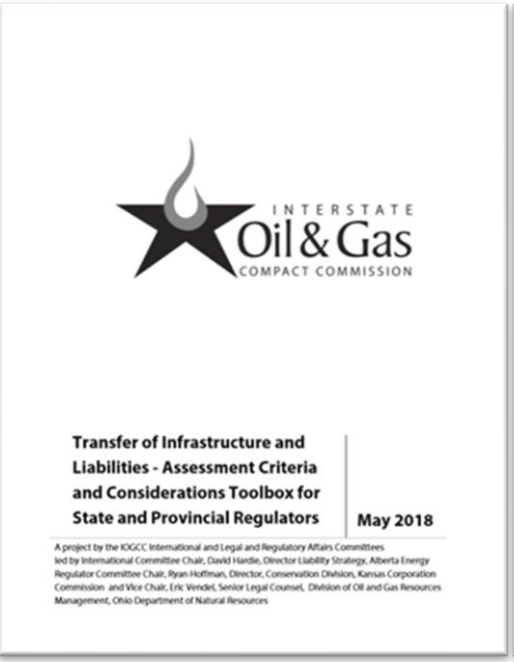
State and Provincial Regulatory Strategies 2026

Casey An
Technical Projects Officer

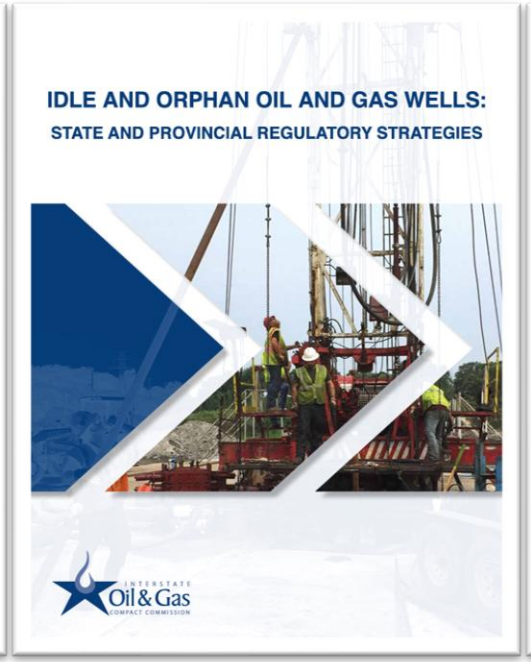
Council of Regulatory Officials
Monday, Oct 26, 2026



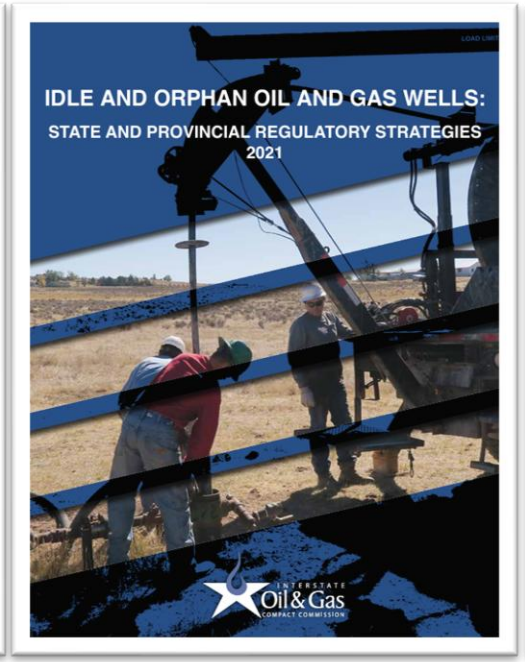
Recent IOGCC work on orphan wells



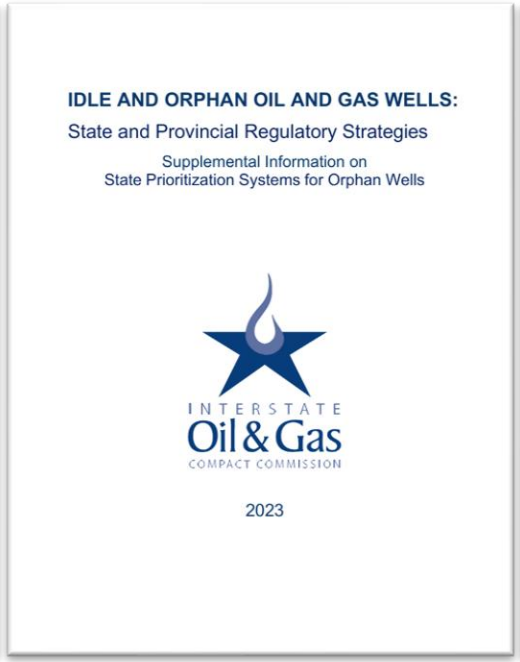
2018



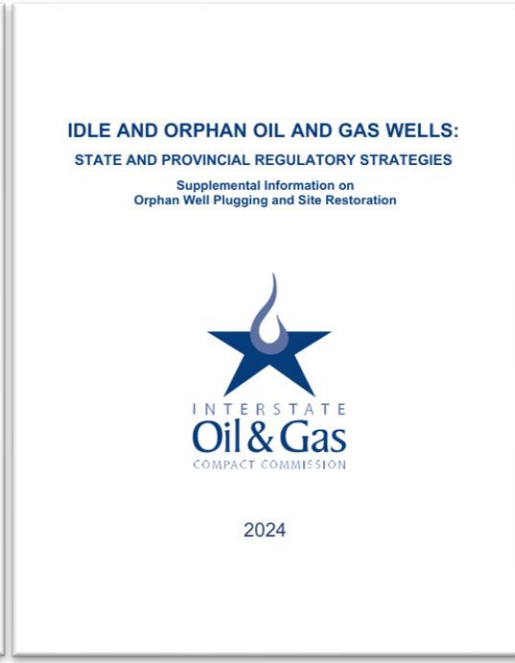
2019



2021



2023

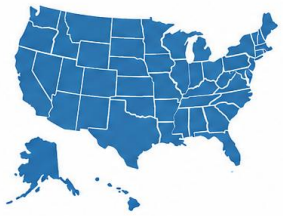


2024

Data collection

- Idle well classification, requirements, and quantity
- Number of documented orphan wells
- Estimated number of undocumented orphan wells
- Orphan well plugging activity and expenditures
- Prioritization process for plugging orphan wells
- Plugging fund details
- Financial assurance

A total of 34 states and 5 provinces responded to the survey.



34
States



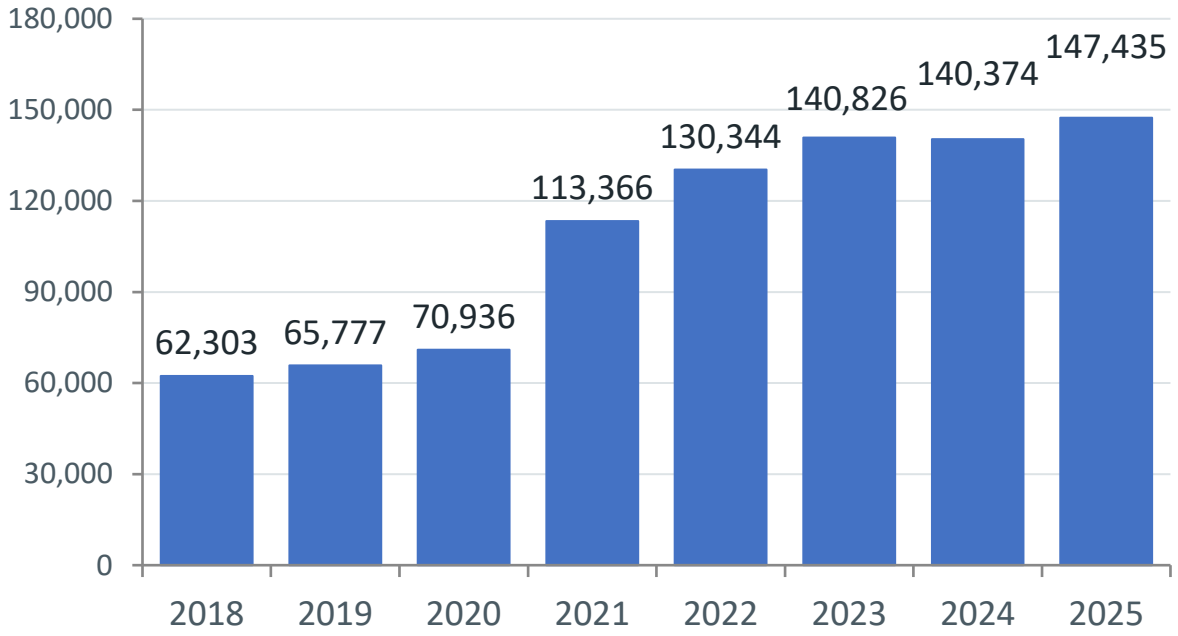
5
Provinces

Documented orphan wells have more than doubled since 2018

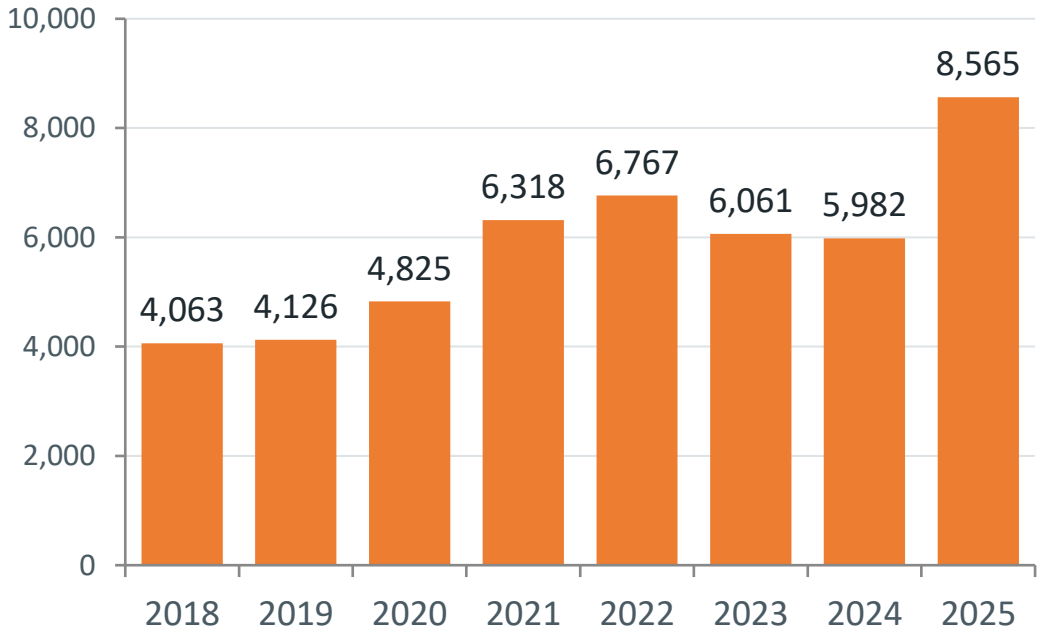
+136.7% to 147,435

+111% to 8,565

States (34 reporting)



Provinces (5 reporting)



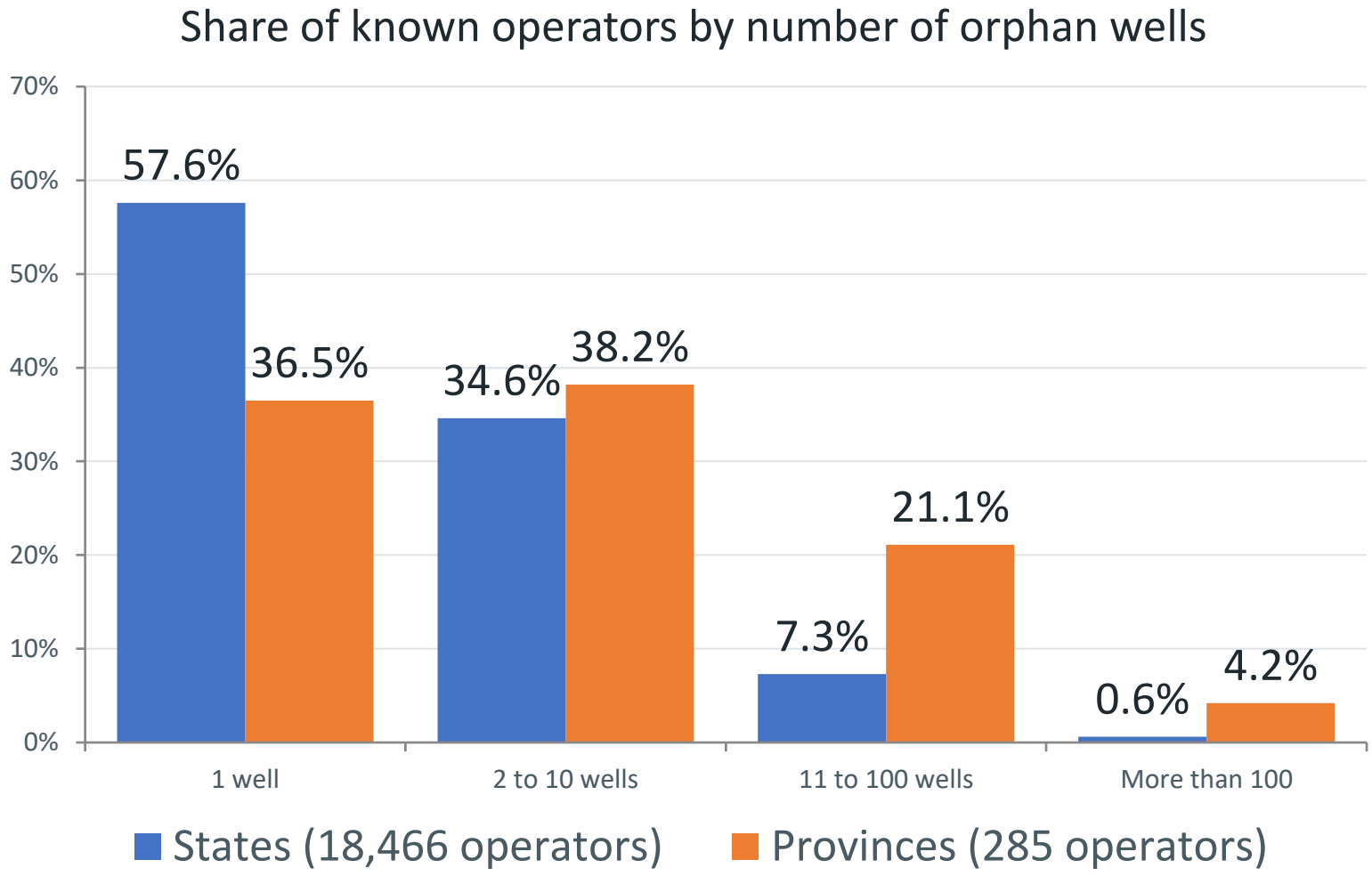
Most documented orphan wells have a known operator

102,313

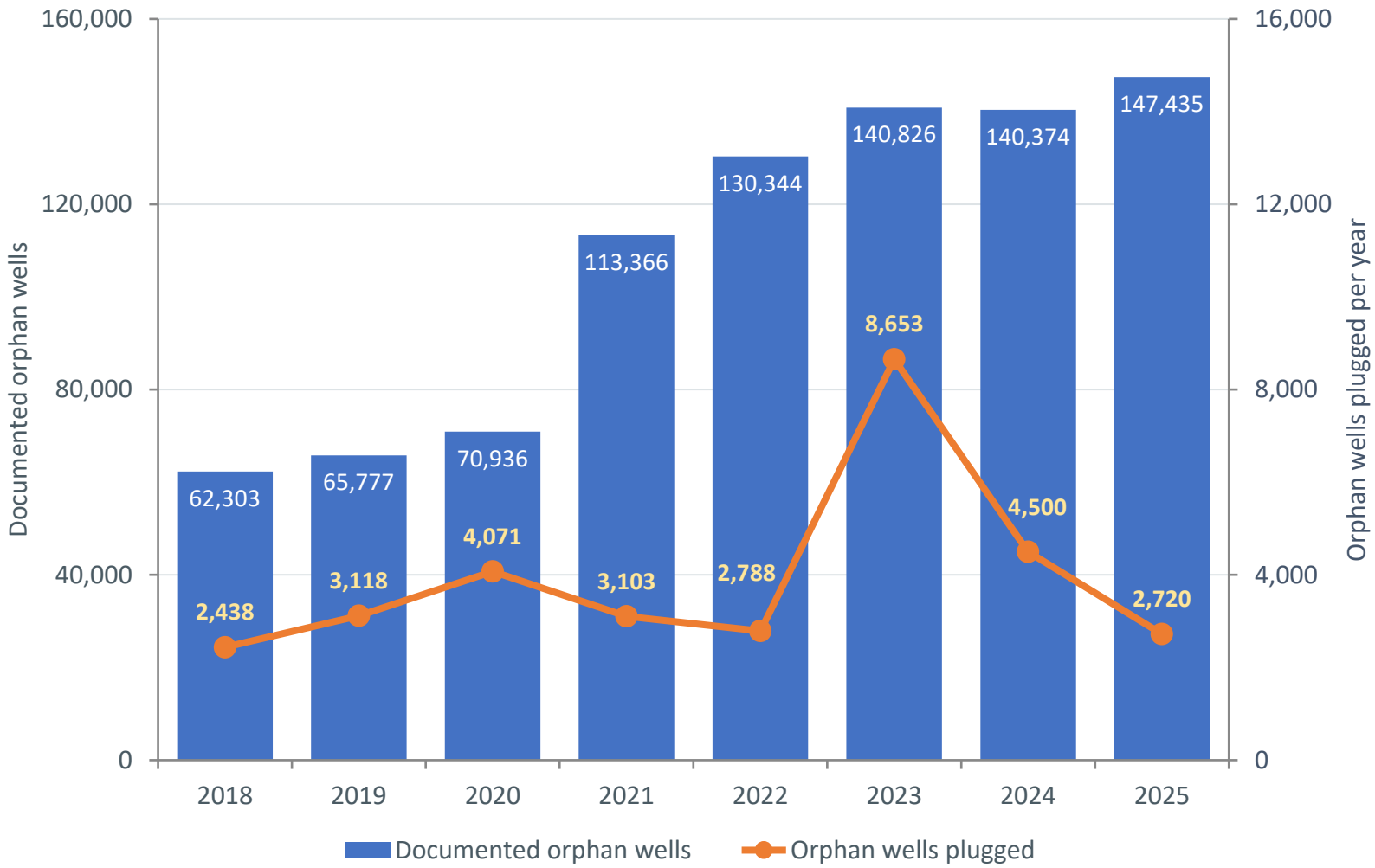
State orphan wells with a known operator (69.4%)

8,564

Provincial orphan wells with a known operator (99.9%)



State orphan well inventory and plugging



8,653

Orphan wells plugged in 2023, the highest year

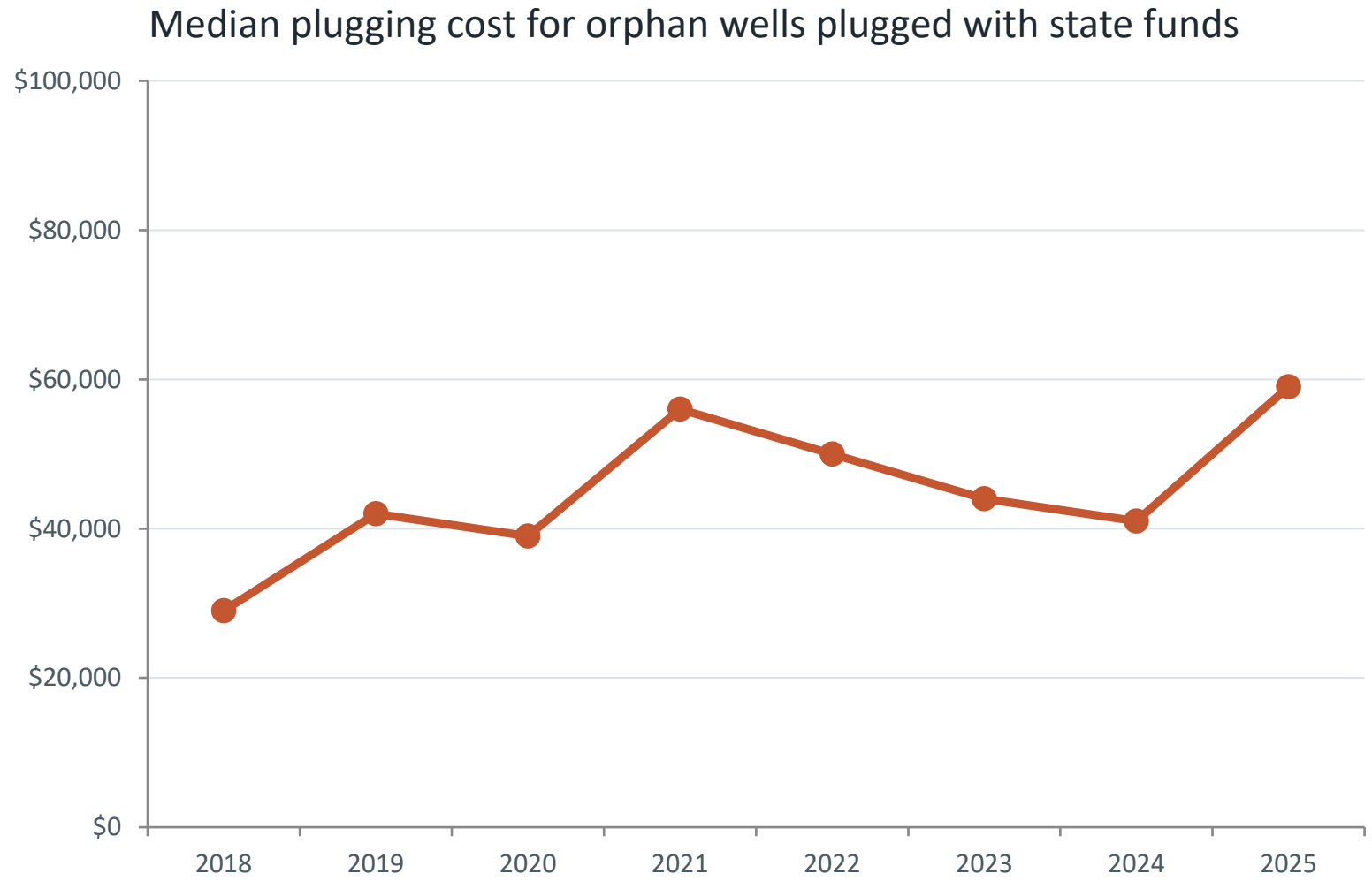
11,072

Plugged with IIJA funds by states, 2022 to 2025

10,328

Plugged with state funds, 2022 to 2025

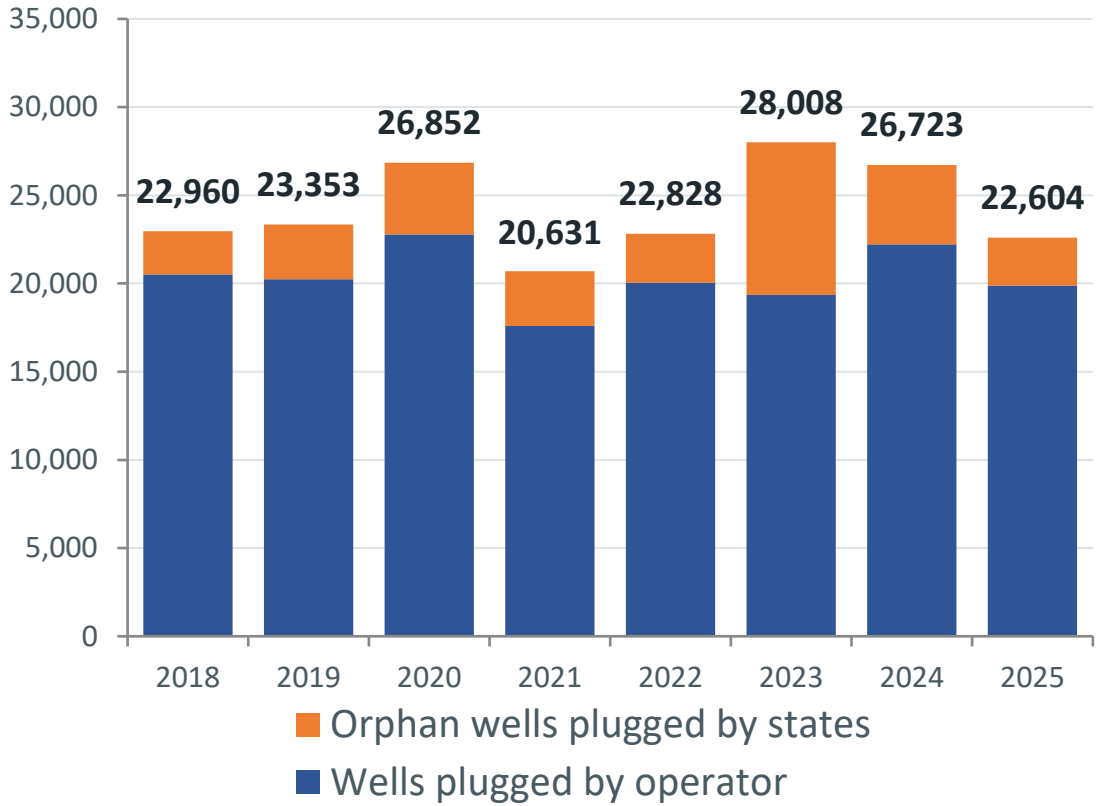
The median cost to plug orphan wells



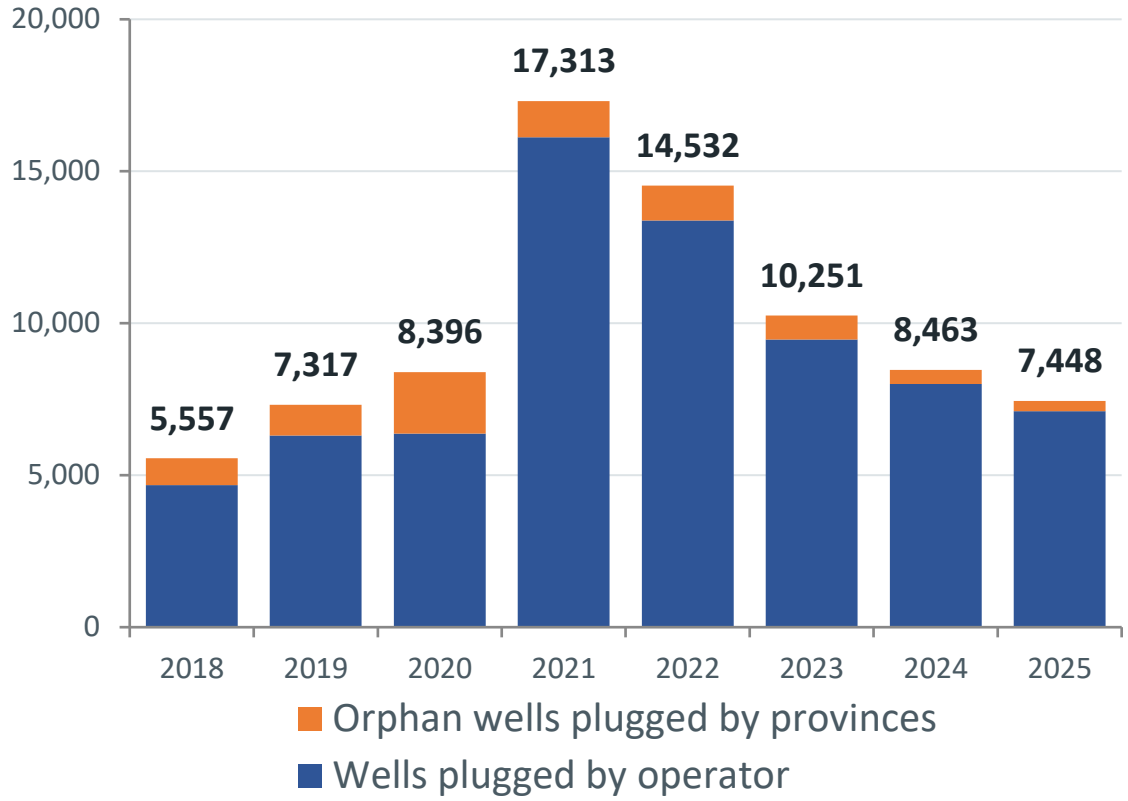
Year	States	Median
2018	21	$29K
2019	22	$42K
2020	25	$39K
2021	23	$56K
2022	20	$50K
2023	21	$44K
2024	16	$41K
2025	21	$59K

Total wells plugged: operators do most of the work

US states (34 reporting)



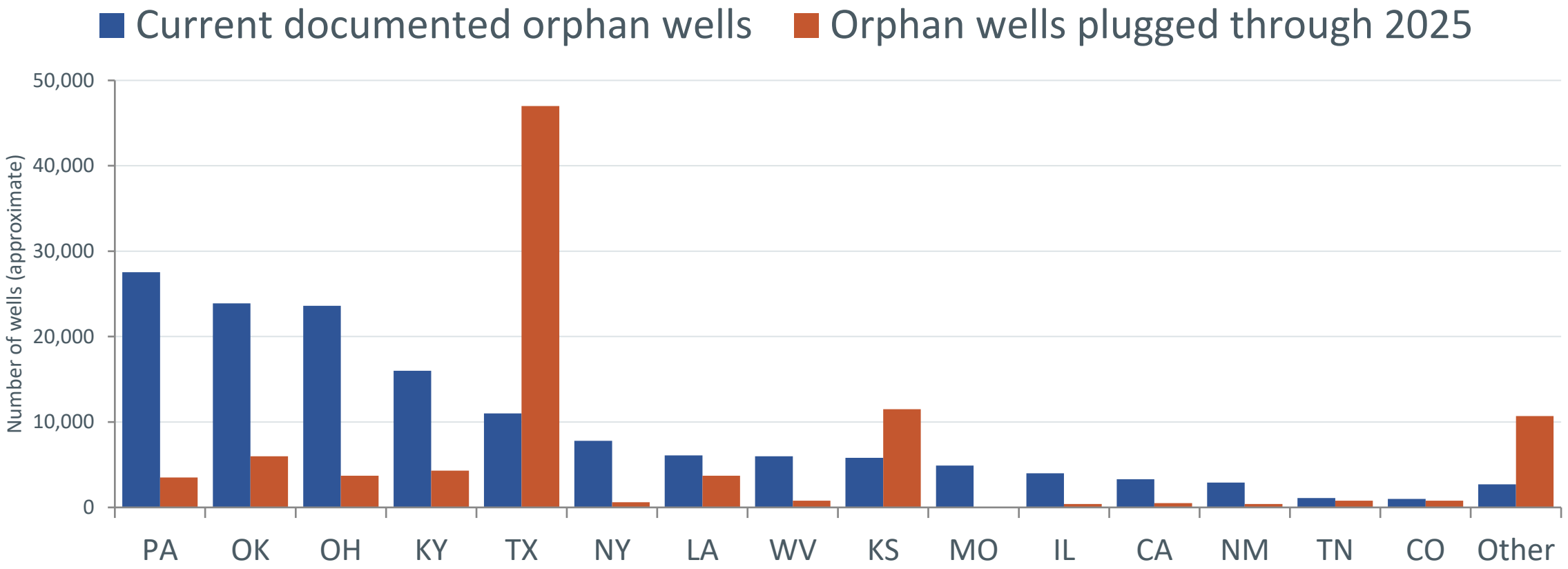
CA provinces (5 reporting)



193,959 wells Plugged 2018 to 2025; 16.2% were orphan wells

79,277 wells Plugged 2018 to 2025; 9.9% were orphan wells

Orphan well plugging progress



95,385 Total orphan well plugged as of Dec 31, 2025

What is next

November 2026

Publish the idle and orphan well report

Roundtable

When the report is ready, we will host a state roundtable discussion

You are invited to join us



INTERSTATE
Oil & Gas
COMPACT COMMISSION

