

Oil and Gas News Briefs

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April 9, 2026

China may continue importing less LNG, even after strait reopens

(Bloomberg; April 8) - Hopes for a strong rebound in China's demand for liquefied natural gas are fading, despite the ceasefire called in the Middle East, as analysts caution over lingering supply risks and higher prices. Chinese LNG imports plunged 11% last year to 68.4 million tonnes, a rare decline in nearly two decades of almost uninterrupted growth. BloombergNEF expects another drop in 2026 to 62.3 million tonnes. Rystad Energy predicts a slight rise to 70 million tonnes.

Even before the U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran shattered the supply chain from the Persian Gulf, Chinese demand for gas was falling as the economy slowed. Apparent consumption declined 0.9% in the first two months of the year, according to government figures, extending the weak run that had persisted through 2025. But reopening the Strait of Hormuz to ship traffic won't make up for the long-term damage caused by Iranian strikes on Qatari facilities. And it won't quell fears that the strait can be weaponized at any time as a chokepoint for global oil and gas supplies.

China, the world's largest gas importer, took roughly a quarter of its LNG from Qatar, which is now facing a yearslong effort to restore operations. Faced with such a shortfall, China is all but certain to limit its exposure to the Persian Gulf. Given Qatar's heft in the market, that could also mean cutting back on LNG and leaning more on domestic gas output and overland gas pipelines from Russia and Central Asia. Substitutes such as coal and renewables, which China has in abundance, are also likely to be favored.

China better prepared than most with massive LNG stockpiles

(The New York Times; April 8) - Two rows of storage tanks the height of 20-story buildings, filled with liquefied natural gas, help explain why China is better prepared than many countries to endure the interruption of gas supplies from the Middle East. Each of six tanks in Yancheng, an industrial port, holds enough natural gas to meet the household needs of Beijing's 22 million people for more than two months. Adjacent to them are four more tanks that are only slightly smaller.

The storage tanks are part of a huge effort by China over the past decade to accumulate stockpiles of all kinds of commodities, from pork and rice to rare-earth metals and coal, in case of a disruption of overseas supplies. But the gas stockpiles — the world's largest above ground are in Yancheng, with more giant storage tanks in southern China — are conspicuously important now. They have helped China cushion

the supply shock caused by the war in the Middle East even as its Asian neighbors, including India, Pakistan and Vietnam, are running low on natural gas.

China is the world's largest importer of natural gas and the largest consumer of fertilizer, much of which is made from gas. China also has the biggest chemicals industry, much of which requires gas as well. The country generates only 4% of its electricity from gas, and can easily replace that with coal and, to some extent, renewable energy.

Gas is particularly difficult to store. The easiest approach is to hold it underground by pumping it into salt caverns or into exhausted underground gas fields. But China has few of these caverns and fields relative to its enormous population. That has prompted it to store enormous quantities of supercooled gas as a liquid in aboveground tanks. China National Offshore Oil Corp. said in December that it had built 18 of its largest size of storage tanks for LNG — more than twice as many as the rest of the world combined.

Iran says it will limit traffic, charge tolls for crossing Strait of Hormuz

(Wall Street Journal; April 8) - Iran told mediators it would limit the number of ships crossing the Strait of Hormuz to around a dozen a day and charge tolls under the ceasefire struck by President Donald Trump, showing Tehran plans to tighten its grip on the world's most important energy-shipping lane. Ships that pass will have to coordinate with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the powerful paramilitary group labeled a terrorist organization by the U.S. and the European Union, Arab mediators said.

Four ships were allowed to pass April 8, the fewest so far in April, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence, down from over 100 a day before the war. Iran is requiring ships to work out toll arrangements ahead of time and then pay fees in cryptocurrency or Chinese yuan, mediators and shipbrokers said. Iran's demands show how it has used the war to create a new source of leverage and revenue. It seized control of the waterway during the fighting by targeting ships that tried to pass without its permission.

The possibility of Iran's permanent role in the administration of the waterway is alarming the Gulf's energy producers, which rely on the strait for the bulk of their exports, and to energy consumers across Europe and Asia. The U.S. is still pushing publicly for a free and open strait. But Iran isn't showing a willingness to loosen its grip. In the waterway the morning of April 8, Iran was broadcasting via marine VHF radio that ships without permission to cross from the Revolutionary Guard navy risked being destroyed.

Spot prices still substantially higher than crude futures

(CNBC; April 8) - The spot price for cargos of Brent crude oil came in at \$124.68 per barrel on April 8 in a sign that the Iran ceasefire agreement is unlikely resolve the deep

supply disruption triggered by the five-week war. The spot price governs Brent oil for delivery in the next 10 to 30 days, in contrast to futures contracts for delivery in June and beyond. The spot price has fallen \$19.75 after the two-week ceasefire agreement between the U.S. and Iran, according to S&P Global, which tracks the data.

But the spot price is still nearly \$30 above the Brent June futures contract that closed at \$94.75 on April 8. The higher price for actual cargo demonstrates that oil supplies will remain tight for some time even if the ceasefire holds. The spot price for actual cargo reflects the reality on the ground and the high seas, said Amrita Sen, founder of Energy Aspects. Middle East oil producers have shut down 13 million barrels per day of production because tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has plunged, Sen said.

Most tankers are now pointing toward the U.S. to pick up oil there, Sen said. It could take until June to redirect those ships back to the Middle East, she said. "It's a complete mess." Hundreds of millions of barrels of oil have been taken off the market due to the war, said Amena Bakr, an expert on the Middle East and OPEC at Kpler. It could take as long as five months to restore capacity, Bakr said. Kuwait Petroleum Corp.'s CEO said in March it would take as long as four months for Gulf producers to fully restore output.

Owners want to understand ceasefire before putting ships at risk

(Bloomberg; April 8) - Shipowners are rushing to understand the fine print of a U.S.-Iran ceasefire that could temporarily unblock the Strait of Hormuz and, at least in theory, provide an exit window for more than 800 vessels trapped in the Persian Gulf. The vital waterway has been virtually closed since U.S. and Israeli strikes at the end of February prompted Iran to tighten its control, triggering an unprecedented energy-supply crunch. The two sides have agreed to a truce in exchange for a reopening of the waterway.

Key details remain uncertain, however. Iran says it has agreed to two weeks of safe passage in coordination with its armed forces and within "technical limitations." Shipowners in Asia, the Middle East and Europe greeted the possibility of a reopening with relief and caution. There was little immediate change in traffic around the strait on April 8, though several said they were calling insurers and security advisers, and had put vessels on standby. They asked not to be named given the sensitivity of the issue.

"The ceasefire may create transit opportunities, but it does not yet provide full maritime certainty and we need to understand all potential conditions attached," said a spokesperson for A.P. Moller-Maersk, the world's second-largest container line. In the past six weeks, traffic through one of the world's busiest energy thoroughfares has slowed to a trickle, relative to the 135 or so vessels that transit daily in peacetime. "You don't switch global shipping flows back on in 24 hours," said Jennifer Parker, adjunct professor at the University of Western Australia Defense and Security Institute.

Timeline uncertain for restoring Persian Gulf oil and gas operations

(The New York Times; April 8) - Reopening the Strait of Hormuz — a central aim for the United States when it agreed to a cease-fire with Iran — would be the first step toward getting more energy flowing through the Persian Gulf. But only the first step. That is because dozens of refineries, storage facilities and oil and gas fields in at least nine countries, from Iran to the United Arab Emirates and beyond, have been targeted in strikes. All told, 10% or more of the world's oil supply has been turned off.

Restarting those operations will require not only safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz, but also inspecting pumps, replacing bespoke processing equipment and recalling employees and ships that have scattered across the globe. "It's not a case of you just flick a switch and everything's back up again," said Martin Houston, a longtime oil and gas executive who now serves as board member for several energy companies.

The timeline for bringing the Gulf energy system back to some semblance of normal is highly uncertain. Attacks on energy facilities continued in the days leading up to the cease-fire, including on an oil refinery in Kuwait and petrochemical complexes in Iran. How much damage has been done to the region's infrastructure is difficult to know because many countries have shared little information. Some infrastructure that has sustained extensive damage is expected to take years to repair.

And once idled, oil and gas wells can be difficult to restart. The longer they are closed, the more trouble companies may have turning them back on. Pressure underground can get out of whack while wells are closed; water can build up. If the shutdowns last a long time, equipment might corrode from being exposed to hydrogen sulfide too long.

IEA director says energy crisis worse than others put together

(Reuters; April 7) - The current oil and gas crisis triggered by the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is "more serious than the ones in 1973, 1979 and 2022 together," Fatih Birol, the head of the International Energy Agency, told Le Figaro newspaper. "The world has never experienced a disruption to energy supply of such magnitude," he said in an interview with the French newspaper released in its April 7 edition.

He said the European countries, as well Japan, Australia and others will suffer, but the countries most at risk were developing nations which will suffer from higher oil and gas prices, higher food prices and a general acceleration of inflation.

Some Persian Gulf producers hurt more than others by closure

(Reuters; April 6) - The Strait of Hormuz closure and the resulting surge in global oil prices have handed financial windfalls to Iran, Oman and Saudi Arabia, while other states that lack alternative shipment routes have lost billions of dollars, a Reuters analysis found. Iran effectively closed the strait after U.S. and Israeli airstrikes on Iran at the end of February led to a widening conflict. Although Iran has control over the Strait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates can bypass it via pipelines and ports.

By contrast, oil from Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar has been trapped as the countries lack alternative routes to international markets. Some analysts say the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran in some ways has strengthened Tehran. "Now that Hormuz has been closed, it can be closed again and again, and that poses a major threat to the global economy," said Neil Quilliam, at the think tank Chatham House. "The genie is out of the bottle."

The analysis of March data found Iraq and Kuwait's estimated oil export revenues both plunged by about three-quarters year-on-year, while Saudi Arabia's increased by 4.3%. The kingdom's biggest pipeline is the 746-mile East-West link, built in the 1980s during the Iran-Iraq war to bypass Hormuz. It connects eastern oil fields to the Red Sea, with an expanded capacity of 7 million barrels per day. The UAE has been shielded somewhat by its Habshan-Fujairah pipeline, at 1.5 million barrels per day, bypassing the strait. Among the Gulf producers, Iraq's revenue fell the most — plunging by 76%.

Energy crisis prompts countries to turn back to nuclear power

(The New York Times; April 6) - In 2011, a meltdown at a nuclear plant in Japan caused governments around the world to move decisively and swiftly away from atomic energy. Fifteen years later, a different kind of energy crisis is hastening a move back. The war in the Middle East is expected to cut the world off from a large source of LNG, a fuel used extensively for power generation across Asia. Even in Europe and other regions with sustained access to gas, the diminishing supply of energy is causing prices to surge.

In response, nuclear power, seen by countries as an alternative energy source that is less vulnerable to outside shocks, is finding new backing even in some of the most historically anti-nuclear places. In Taiwan, where the ruling party has opposed nuclear energy for decades, President Lai Ching-te said last month that the island should be open to nuclear power as a way to meet its growing energy demands.

After the 2011 nuclear disaster in Japan, Taipei committed to a "nuclear-free homeland" policy. The island shut down its final reactor last May. In the past month, Taiwan's energy supply has been strained by the Iran war. The phaseout of nuclear power has left the island precariously dependent on imports for nearly all its energy needs, just as its vital semiconductor industry requires more power. Days after Lai's remarks, Taiwan's state utility company submitted a plan to restart one of the island's nuclear plants.

Similar shifts are visible across Asia, which buys about 90% of the liquefied natural gas that the Middle East produces. In Japan, which mothballed its entire nuclear fleet after the 2011 disaster, regulators decided last week to alter anti-terrorism requirements to effectively prevent the shutdown of some operational reactors and facilitate more restarts. In South Korea, the government said last month it would accelerate maintenance on five of the 10 nuclear power plants so they could be restarted earlier.

Countries are trying to conserve fuel, cut taxes to hold down prices

(Wall Street Journal; April 5) - The oil shock set off by the war in Iran is already rippling through Asia, where factories are curbing production to save energy and some gas stations are telling drivers they can fill up only partway. Economists say it is a sign of things to come for countries in Europe and Africa that also rely on imports from the Middle East. Asia and the broader Pacific region have been the first to see serious constraints on supply. The continent is also geographically closer to the Gulf, which means that most ships that were en route when the war started have already arrived.

Making matters worse, many Asian countries have low domestic energy stockpiles, though some nations like Japan, China and South Korea hold large buffers. "The reality is, the economic shocks caused by this war will be with us for months," Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said last week. Australia has begun issuing weekly updates on national fuel stocks. As of March 31, the country had 39 days of gasoline, 29 days of diesel and 30 days of jet fuel. Albanese urged Australians to take public transport to preserve supplies for industries such as mining and farming.

Most governments are trying to cushion the price shock for consumers and businesses by cutting fuel or road taxes or introducing cash handouts. While oil prices have risen by 53% in Asia over the past month, domestic fuel prices have increased only 16%, analysts at Morgan Stanley said. But keeping prices down during a supply crisis also props up demand, making shortages worse. Poorer countries, however, lack the funds to sustain such measures to help consumers.

Taiwan boosts coal-fired power to ensure electricity supply

(Bloomberg; April 7) - Taiwan will increase coal-fired power generation to bolster energy security, as the war in the Middle East crimps liquefied natural gas supplies. Taiwan Power Co., the government-owned utility that's the main electricity supplier, will procure coal-fired power from the Mailiao plant starting in May, the Ministry of Economic Affairs said. Global energy markets have been upended by the war between the U.S., Israel and Iran, which has cut flows of liquefied natural gas and crude oil.

That's forced governments to lean more on the dirtiest fossil fuel for power generation. In Asia, Japan, South Korea and Bangladesh have all increased their reliance on coal, while in Europe, countries including Poland may boost usage of coal gas. Germany, meanwhile, may reactivate a mothballed coal plant. Taiwan — which houses some of the world's top chipmakers — typically relies on LNG for about half its electricity generation and bought about one-third of its supplies from Qatar last year.

A shutdown of the largest LNG plant in Qatar, coupled with the near-complete closure of the Strait of Hormuz, has sent Taiwan scrambling for alternatives. While the island has managed to secure LNG supply through May and also has arrangements for about half of its June requirements, additional spending on oil and gas is estimated to cost billions of dollars. The move to increase coal-fired power aims to address LNG supply risks, while mitigating the impact of high gas prices on electricity rates, the ministry said.

Russia reportedly offering sanctioned LNG at steep discount

(Bloomberg; April 8) - Russia is seeking to leverage a global natural gas supply crunch to lure energy-starved South Asia into purchasing shipments from its U.S.-sanctioned facilities, according to people familiar with the matter. The shipments were being offered at a 40% discount to spot prices last week via little-known intermediary companies based in China and Russia, said the sources. The sellers said that they could provide paperwork to make it appear that the shipments originated from non-Russian sources, like Oman or Nigeria, the people said.

Bloomberg News wasn't able to confirm whether any of the shipments were purchased. The effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz — and attacks on the world's largest LNG export plant in Qatar — has throttled about a fifth of global supply, upending the gas market and lifting prices. Shipments from Qatar have come to a standstill, forcing customers in Bangladesh and India to look for more expensive alternatives.

Bangladesh, which received 60% of its LNG from Qatar last year, has resorted to buying shipments from the spot market, at times spending roughly double what it would have under its long-term contracts with the Middle Eastern nation. While Russia has been steadily expanding exports from its U.S.-sanctioned export plants — Arctic LNG 2 and Portovaya — most buyers remain wary of taking restricted shipments out of fear of retaliation from Washington. China has so far been the only country to import the sanctioned Russian LNG via a network of shadow fleet vessels.

India buys oil and gas from Iran, showing it is not taking sides in war

(CNBC; April 6) - India has begun buying oil and gas from Iran after a seven-year hiatus as it grapples with supply disruptions and elevated energy prices triggered by the U.S.-

Israel war on Iran. India's move to resume Iranian energy imports — the first purchases since 2019, according to energy intelligence firm Rystad Energy — is unlikely to draw immediate ire from Washington, but analysts say it underscores New Delhi's attempt to rebalance its ties with Tehran.

On April 4, India's Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas confirmed that a tanker carrying 44,000 metric tons of Iranian liquefied petroleum gas had berthed at a southern Indian port. "It's a confidence-building mechanism with Tehran," Arpit Chaturvedi, South Asia adviser at Teneo, told CNBC. The purchases act as an "insurance policy," signaling that India does not intend to take sides in the Iran war. In return, India "expects cooperation from Iran" to ensure the safe passage of its ships through the Strait of Hormuz in the future, he said.

India, the world's third-largest oil importer and second-largest consumer of liquefied petroleum gas (generally propane), is heavily dependent on supplies transiting the strait of Hormuz. About 50% of its crude oil and most of its LPG — the primary cooking fuel for households and commercial establishments — passes through the strait. Meanwhile, 17 Indian-flagged vessels are awaiting safe passage through the strait, and seven have crossed the route in recent weeks following diplomatic engagement with Tehran. The move suggests India is drawing clear limits in its alignment with the U.S.

[Iraq says it could restore oil to 3.4 million barrels per day in a week](#)

(Reuters; April 6) - Iraq could restore crude oil exports to around 3.4 million barrels per day within a week provided the Iran war ends and the Strait of Hormuz reopens, the head of the country's state-run Basra Oil Co. said. Among Gulf oil producers, Iraq has suffered the biggest drop in oil revenue as a result of the effective closure of the strait, a Reuters analysis has found, because it lacks alternative shipment routes.

But the country, the second biggest producer in the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, can quickly restore output to levels before U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran at the end of February led to the effective closure of the waterway. Bassem Abdul Karim said Iran has so far provided only verbal guarantees that would allow Iraqi tankers permission to transit the strait. "We have not received any formal documents regarding permission for Iraqi tankers to pass," he said in an interview with Reuters.

He said production from Iraq's southern oil fields is now around 900,000 barrels per day, but if the war ends and safe passage is guaranteed, exports could reach 3.4 million within a week. Last month, Iraq's production dropped by about 80%, to around 800,000 barrels per day, Iraqi energy officials told Reuters last month as the war meant Iraq could not export and storage filled. With limited outlets, production from the Rumaila field fell to around 400,000, down from 1.35 million before the conflict, and at the Zubair field the level was about 300,000, down 340,000 before the war, Abdul Karim said.

Venture Global positioned to profit from high spot-market LNG prices

(Wall Street Journal; April 7) - The world is in the throes of a significant energy shock for the second time in four years. U.S. liquefied natural gas exporter Venture Global is ready to reap the profits. With an unorthodox business model that allows it to capitalize on global disruptions, Venture Global raked in billions of dollars in 2022 when Russia throttled gas deliveries to Europe and buyers sought new supplies. The windfall helped the company become the second-largest U.S. exporter of LNG, after Cheniere Energy.

Venture Global is positioned for a repeat scenario that could boost its ambition to not only surpass Cheniere but also overtake Qatar, the tiny Middle Eastern nation that sits on some of the world's largest gas reserves and has become an LNG juggernaut. The Strait of Hormuz remains closed to most tankers, which has clogged LNG flows. That has turned Venture Global's available cargoes into a hot commodity. Unlike Cheniere, which sells most of its cargoes under long-term contracts, Venture Global reserves a large share of its volumes for spot markets, where prices can fluctuate widely.

Venture Global, which went public last year and is valued at roughly \$39 billion, has positioned its Gulf Coast terminals as the answer to Asian and European buyers thirsting for gas. Venture Global has said that over 30% of its cargoes this year are available for sale on the spot market. If spot prices shoot higher, that can more than make up for the slimmer profit the company garners from its long-term contracts, which it offers at a low cost. It is a risky strategy — but one that appears set to pay off again.

The Asian benchmark for LNG has nearly doubled since the war began. The European benchmark last week traded near \$17 per million Btu, up from about \$10. "They keep getting bailed out by wars," said Louis Lazzara, head of research at investment firm Energy Income Partners. "They will make a lot of money off this." The company operates two large terminals on the Louisiana coast and is building a third.

Russian crude fetches highest price in more than 13 years

(Bloomberg; April 7) - Russian crude prices rose to the highest in more than 13 years as Moscow benefited from the Iran-linked global oil rally. The country's flagship Urals crude reached \$116.05 a barrel on April 2 in Russia's port of Primorsk, the biggest oil-export facility on the nation's Baltic coast, according to data from Argus Media. The price, which doesn't include shipping costs, is almost twice as high as the average \$59 a barrel assumed in Russia's budget for this year. Windfall oil revenues are easing pressure on the Kremlin's finances as it continues its war in Ukraine.

The Middle East conflict has effectively choked off about a fifth of world's oil supplies. In Russia's Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, Urals crude reached \$114.45 a barrel on April 2, according to Argus Media. The average discount of Urals from Russia's western ports

to the global benchmark Dated Brent narrowed to below \$27.75 a barrel, the lowest since mid-December.

Freeport LNG in Texas wants to dismantle unused import facilities

(Reuters; April 7) - Freeport LNG has asked U.S. regulators for permission to demolish facilities in Texas that were previously used to import liquefied natural gas, according to a regulatory filing. While the U.S. was once a major importer of the fuel, the shale revolution transformed the domestic gas market and turned the country into the world's largest LNG exporter. Freeport has not imported LNG at its Texas terminal since 2011.

“As the terminal has been operated exclusively for the purpose of liquefying natural gas and exporting LNG, and has not regasified imported LNG for well over a decade, Freeport LNG proposes to decommission, disconnect and/or demolish certain obsolete facilities,” the company told the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Freeport, the third largest U.S. LNG exporter, said it wants FERC approval by the end of this year. It said removing the unused infrastructure would improve safety and significantly reduce the time employees spend maintaining and inspecting non-operational assets.

Temporary Jones Act waiver has not helped U.S. supply

(Reuters; April 6) - U.S. President Donald Trump's move allowing foreign-flagged cargo ships to move fuel and other goods between domestic ports has so far had little impact on American oil supply, according to trade data and analysts who noted that U.S. refiners and shippers are earning more profits sending fuel overseas. Last month, Trump waived Jones Act limitations for 60 days starting March 17, hoping the move would help tame the surge in fuel prices caused by the Iran war by increasing shipments from the U.S. Gulf Coast to other coastal markets in the country.

So far, however, shipping data shows the move has not boosted U.S. oil flows between domestic ports. Instead, U.S. fuel exports hit a record high last month, as refiners shipped more fuel from the U.S. Gulf Coast to Asia and Europe, and even reversed traditional flows to export from the U.S. East Coast to Europe.

The Jones Act limits movements of goods between U.S. ports to U.S.-flagged vessels only. Low availability of such vessels was partly blamed for high fuel prices in California, Hawaii and other U.S. markets that lack pipelines to U.S. Gulf Coast refiners. Crude oil, refined products, biofuels and liquid chemicals shipments between U.S. ports were virtually unchanged in March from February, Kpler data showed. U.S. refiners are reaping better margins sending fuel abroad than selling it within U.S. markets.

List of abandoned Louisiana oil and gas wells grows to nearly 6,500

(NOLA.com; New Orleans; April 5) - The number of abandoned oil and gas wells in Louisiana has surged over the past year despite efforts to address the problem, reaching a record high and placing a heavy financial burden on the state to plug them. The recent increase follows a trend that has been building for years, partly due to the industry's financial fluctuations and shifting regulations, officials say. More than 2,100 wells have been labeled as "orphaned" since the start of 2025, leaving the state with nearly 6,500, according to the Louisiana Department of Conservation and Energy.

High well-plugging costs, compounded by decades of lax regulatory requirements, have created the dilemma. The state recently strengthened rules on well owners and created a new authority to oversee how companies meet their financial obligations, but there are questions over whether those changes will be enough. Many wells on the orphaned list were drilled decades ago and risk blowing out if not plugged. That's what happened to an inactive, though not yet orphaned, 82-year-old well in Plaquemines Parish last year. The Coast Guard recovered more than 170,000 gallons of oily water after the spill.

"This is not a new problem, but it is one that needed a new approach, something this administration recognized from the start," said Patrick Courreges, spokesperson for the Department of Conservation and Energy. "But this may be the generation where the bill is finally coming due." Orphaned wells are inactive and unplugged oil and gas wells that fall to the state to plug and remediate, often after the previous owner goes bankrupt, dissolves or repeatedly violates state regulations. In 2025, more than 1,600 wells were added to Louisiana's orphaned well list. So far in 2026, 517 wells have been added.