

FACT SHEET

Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance

Summary

Pursuant to a Mayoral and City Council directive, Los Angeles City Planning released the proposed Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance per Assembly Bill (AB) 3233. The ordinance would amend the Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) to reinstate the previously adopted policy relative to oil and gas drilling activity, which would prohibit new oil drilling and disallow the expansion or intensification of existing extraction activities and wells in all zones. If adopted, the ordinance would put an end to existing operations after a 20-year amortization period.

Background

Studies show that activities related to oil and gas operations have been associated with many potential negative health, safety, and land use impacts, especially when they occur in close proximity to sensitive uses such as homes, schools, places of worship, recreation areas, and healthcare facilities. Consistent with City and State policies on climate change, Los Angeles is introducing regulations that would phase out oil activities altogether to lessen the known hazards to public health, safety and the environment. This policy aims to improve the City's overall livability while addressing long-standing injustices to frontline communities and communities of color disproportionately affected by the detrimental impacts of drill sites.

For decades, neighborhood groups and community members have called for greater environmental protections around urban oil drilling in Los Angeles. In 2022, the Los Angeles City Council responded to these concerns by adopting Ordinance No. 187,709. The historic Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance was operative on January 18, 2023, however the implementation faced challenges. Immediately following the adoption of the

ordinance, six lawsuits were filed against the ordinance and all associated zoning implementation documents by various oil operators and groups, including Warren Resources, E&B Natural Resources, Naro, and Bridgeland. The Court ultimately ruled that state law preempted the original Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance.

However, a significant shift in the state legislative landscape has since occurred with the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 3233. This bill, which became effective on January 1, 2025, affirms and clarifies the authority of local governments to regulate, limit, or prohibit oil and gas operations within their jurisdictions.

On January 28, 2025, with Mayoral approval, the City Council instructed City Planning to begin work for a new oil ordinance under AB 3233. On September 17, 2025, City Planning released the proposed Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance per Assembly Bill (AB) 3233 for public review and feedback which is available [here](#).

Key Provisions

The proposed ordinance aims to:

- Prohibit new oil and gas drilling citywide;
- Make all oil and gas activities a nonconforming use;
- Disallow the expansion or intensification of existing extraction activities and wells in all zones
- Cease all existing oil operations within a 20-year phase-out period; and
- Prevent, respond to, or cease credible threats to public health, safety or the environment through multi-tiered processes

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the proposed ordinance do?

The ordinance would amend the Los Angeles Municipal Code to phase out oil drilling in the City by immediately banning new oil and gas drilling and expansion or intensification of existing extraction activities and wells in all zones, and requiring all existing oil and gas operations to cease within a 20-year amortization period.

Why is the City moving to phase out oil drilling?

Los Angeles aims to protect communities and the environment in which they live and address global climate change. Residents throughout the City have expressed concerns over the hazards of oil drilling, especially when they occur in close proximity to sensitive uses such as homes, schools, places of worship, recreation areas, and healthcare facilities. Frontline communities and communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by the negative effects of oil drilling, which is a known hazard to public health and safety. As such, there is a great need to take actions to protect the public from the range of possible risks and hazards associated with oil and gas extraction, production, and storage infrastructure operation.

What are the key differences between this and the prior 2022 ordinance?

The proposed ordinance maintains the key policy objectives from the 2022 Ordinance No. 187,709, which include prohibiting new oil and gas drilling citywide, making all oil and gas activities a nonconforming use, disallowing the expansion or intensification of existing extraction activities and wells in all zones, and applying the existing 20-year phase out period. The key differences are largely around clarifying terms and definitions; improving readability in both the organization and formatting of regulations; and incorporating content of prior zoning implementation documents (including defining well maintenance and servicing and clarifying procedures for health and safety exceptions and compliance review). Lastly, the proposed ordinance incorporates the same Chapter 1 regulations into Chapter 1A of the Los Angeles Municipal Code so that these key policy objectives are uniformly applied citywide as more Community Plans adopt the New Zoning Code (Chapter 1A).

How many oil and gas sites are there in the City?

In Los Angeles, there are 28 oil and gas fields and more than 5,200 oil and gas wells (active and idle, with some of them abandoned). Wells are found in nearly all parts of the City including but not limited to Wilmington, Harbor Gateway, Downtown, West Los Angeles, South Los Angeles, and the Northwest San Fernando Valley.

What does the ordinance mean for existing operators?

The ordinance will make existing oil operations legally nonconforming uses, subject to an existing 20-year amortization period. This means that existing drill sites may continue to operate for up to 20 years after which time all drilling related activities must cease. During the amortization period, acidizing, hydraulic fracturing, gravel packing, maintenance acidizing, matrix acidizing, and acid fracturing are prohibited. The ordinance does allow for limited pathways for these activities only when they are deemed necessary to prevent, respond to, or cease any credible threats to public health, safety or the environment.

Why are existing operators given time to phase out their operations?

The amortization period allows operators to recoup their capital investments in oil drilling activities prior to instituting plans for the decommissioning of existing wells. The Mayor and Los Angeles City Council directed the Office of Petroleum and Natural Gas Administration and Safety (OPNGAS) to prepare amortization studies to analyze instances when the operator may recoup their investments prior to the proposed 20-year amortization period as stipulated under this ordinance. Any reduced amortization period would necessitate a separate Council instruction and code amendment.

Can operators maintain their wells during the amortization phase?

Well servicing activities such as replacement of tanks, appurtenant structures, and equipment would not be affected by this ordinance. Maintenance activities, new equipment, or changes to operations that would typically be banned under a nonconforming use of land may be allowed under a narrow exception triggered only when the proposed work is necessary to "prevent, respond to, or cease a credible threat to public health, safety, or the environment".

Will current operators be able to continue operating?

Existing oil drilling operators will be required to cease operations at the end of an amortization period. The proposed ordinance requires a discretionary review process to evaluate operators' potential requests to modify existing operations before oil operations come to a complete halt. This discretionary process will include a strict set of findings, a robust public review process, and environmental review to determine the appropriateness of an operator's request to conduct any drilling, deepening, well maintenance, or changes to the operation or use during the amortization period. This discretionary process is intended to provide additional

protections to the public from the range of possible health risks and environmental hazards associated with oil and gas extraction, production, and storage infrastructure operation, while ensuring the eventual cessation of all oil activities in the City of Los Angeles. Finally, under limited circumstances, if another regulatory agency has ordered work to occur and/or determines that there is a risk to public health and safety, and if established criteria are met, an administrative pathway for requisite work may be approved.

What agencies oversee the plugging & abandonment of wells?

There are several State and local regulations/agencies (outside of the purview of City Planning's jurisdiction) that regulate and govern abandonment and remediation efforts, including the California Geologic Energy Management Division, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the South Coast Air Quality Management District and the Los Angeles Fire Department, Certified Unified Program Agency.

What is the anticipated timeline and next steps for adoption of the proposed ordinance?

The proposed Oil Ordinance was released to the public for comment on September 17, 2025. One stakeholder meeting was held on June 3, 2025 with approximately 140 of participants. A second stakeholder meeting is planned for October 1, 2025. The public comment will continue to be accepted throughout the review and adoption process.

The proposed ordinance is expected to advance through the legislative process later in late fall/early winter, at which time it will be considered by the City Planning Commission (CPC). The legislative process is anticipated to take place through the remainder of 2025 and early 2026.

An environmental review is underway and, once it is released, the Department of City Planning will notify stakeholders and interested parties via email.

Environmental documents will also be posted on the Department's website.

Please visit City Planning's [website](#) to view the proposed Oil Ordinance (scroll down to "Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance - Per AB 3233"), related documents and important dates. If you have any questions or would like to sign up for updates and/or provide feedback, please email planning.oildrilling@lacity.org.



How can I stay informed on the progress of this ordinance?

To request to be added to an interested parties list, please email
planning.oildrilling@lacity.org.