Press Statement

Crucial Legislation Introduced to Address Orphaned Oil & Gas Wells

New Bill Tackles Crisis with Stronger Bonding and Funds for Reclamation

Billings, MT -- Today, U.S. Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) introduced legislation to address the pressing issue of orphaned oil and gas wells. His Oil and Gas Bonding Reform and Orphaned Well Remediation Act would strengthen bonding requirements and provide states and BLM with funding to reclaim orphaned wells -- ensuring this crisis is fixed in the short term while reforming the federal bonding system so that our communities do not face a similar crisis in the future.

Additionally, Bennet’s Public Engagement Opportunity on Public Land Exploration (PEOPLE) Act of 2021 creates new standards to ensure robust public participation in land management decisions.

In response to the bill introduction, Barbara Vasquez a member of the Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) from Cowdrey, Colorado, said:

"Senator Bennet's bills introduced today are welcomed by rural Westerners who live near oil and gas drilling. For almost a century, lax rules have allowed companies to leave behind leaking and destructive orphaned wells on public and private lands. A nationwide cleanup plan will protect farmlands, create jobs, and prevent continued pollution. These bills also give local residents in the oil patch a stronger voice in when and how development proceeds and ensure corporations will clean up after themselves, creating thousands of well-paying jobs in the process."

###

The Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) is a network of grassroots organizations that span seven of the Western states with more than 19,000 members. Headquartered in Billings, Montana, WORC also has offices in Colorado and Washington, D.C.