

New bill to take a closer look at oil wells and natural seepage along Santa Barbara Coast

Jordan Bell, Central Coast Public Radio, 1-25-16

A new bill that would require the state to study unused oil wells along the California Coast is being considered by Sacramento lawmakers.

Local Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson introduced (D- Santa Barbara) the 'Coast Oil Well Cleanup Act' on Monday.

Jackson said a coastal well has been leaking a significant amount of oil in the Summerland Beach area. She says the new bill will secure funds to pay to cap that well, which was improperly capped decades ago.

SB 900 will also require the state to determine whether the 200 other 'orphaned' oil wells, most of which are along the Central Coast, are leaking oil. The bill would also take a look at natural seepage.

"Part of the goal of this bill is to map the 200 well-heads and see which ones are leaking and then try to determine whether or not there is, in fact, natural seepage out there, what [are] the causes of it, and if there's anything we can do about it," said Jackson.

The California Independent Petroleum Association says it is currently reviewing the language of SB 900 and has no comment at this point.