**Abandoned Oil Wells Leak Pollutants**

**废弃油井带来的污染问题**

More than a century of oil and gas drilling has left behind millions of unused wells, many of which release pollutants into the air and water.

一个多世纪的石油和天然气钻探留下了数百万口从未使用过的油井，其中许多油井向空气和水中排放污染物。

Drilling companies are likely to leave behind many more abandoned wells since they are losing money, as oil prices struggle to recover from historic lows, experts say. They note that the coronavirus health crisis crushed international demand for fuel.

专家表示，由于油价难以从历史低点回升，钻井公司可能会因亏损留下更多的废弃油井。他们指出，冠状病毒健康危机致使国际燃料需求崩塌式下降。

Leaks from abandoned wells have long been recognized as an environmental problem and a risk to public health. Studies have linked abandoned wells to groundwater pollution in the United States. They also have been blamed for a large number of public safety incidents over the years.

废弃油井的泄漏长期以来一直被认为是一个环境问题和对公众健康的威胁。研究表明，美国的废弃油井与地下水污染有关。多年来，油井被指责与许多公共安全事件有关。

Abandoned wells are also a serious threat to Earth’s climate that researchers and government officials are only starting to understand. That finding comes from a Reuters news agency review of government records and statements by scientists, government experts and United Nations officials.

废弃的油井也严重威胁着地球气候，而对此研究人员和政府官员才刚开始进行研究了解。路透社审阅了科学家、政府专家和联合国官方共同制作的政府档案及报表得出这一发现。

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change offered a proposal to U.N. member countries last year. It urged them to start studying and publishing information about the amount of methane released from abandoned oil and gas wells.

政府间气候变化专门委员会（IPCC）去年向联合国会员国提出了一项建议。它敦促他们开始研究和公布废弃油气井释放甲烷的数量信息。

Currently, Canada and the United States are the only countries to do so. In the U.S., more than 3 million abandoned oil and gas wells together released some 281 kilotons of methane in 2010. Those numbers come from the Environmental Protection Agency’s most recent report to the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change.

目前，加拿大和美国是唯一这样做的国家。在美国，2010年共有300多万口废弃的油气井释放出约28.1万吨甲烷。这一数字来自美国环境保护署最近提交联合国气候变化框架公约的报告。

The Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA report noted that the amount of methane emitted is almost equal to the burning of 16.2 million barrels of crude oil.

环保署(EPA)的报告指出，甲烷的排放量几乎相当于1亿6千2百万桶原油的燃烧量。

The true amount, the EPA said, may be 3 times higher because of incomplete data.

环保署还表示，由于数据不完整实际数量可能会高出3倍。

The problem is less serious in Canada, where most oil production comes from oil sands mining instead of traditional drilling operations. The Canadian government believes the country’s 313,000 abandoned wells released about 10.1 kilotons of methane in 2018, far less than the United States.

相对而言加拿大的这类问题则没那么严重，那里的大多数石油生产来自油砂开采，而不是传统的钻探作业。加拿大政府认为，该国31.3万口废弃井2018年释放的甲烷约为10万1千吨，远低于美国。

The effect of abandoned wells on the health of our planet is more difficult to study. The governments of Russia, Saudi Arabia and China – the world’s other top oil and gas producers – did not respond to Reuters’ requests for comments.

废弃井对地球健康的影响研究难度更大。俄罗斯、沙特阿拉伯和中国等全球最大的石油和天然气生产国政府没有回应路透社的置评请求。

Researchers note that it is impossible to say the total amount of emissions worldwide without better records. But an estimate by Reuters, based on the U.S. numbers for oil and gas production, would place the total number of abandoned wells at around 29 million. That number of wells could release as much as 2.5 million tons of methane per year.

研究人员指出，如果没有更好的记录就不可能得知全世界的排放总量。但路透社根据美国石油和天然气生产数据估计，废弃油井总数将达到2900万口左右。这一数量的油井每年可能释放多达250万吨甲烷。

I’m John Russell.

约翰·拉塞尔报道。

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