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it...it has some implications and some importance.

SENATOR MATZKE: Thank you, Senator Beutler, I'd be glad to. An oil well is generally drilled to a depth of somewhere between three and seven thousand feet. Maybe the average oil well is about a mile deep. When the pipe is placed in the hole for the production of oil, it is perforated. In other words, holes are poked in it so that the oil can flow into the bottom of the pipe and be produced, of course, to the surface. So when an oil well is plugged, when it is...when it has exhausted its economic usefulness and can no longer produce oil, it is actually cemented at three levels. First, it is cemented at the bottom of the hole where those perforations are. And, secondly, it's cemented near its surface casing to prevent any contamination of the surface water. And, thirdly, it is plugged at the surface, actually five feet below the surface, with a concrete plug. Now, the primary reason in doing this is to prevent the water a mile below the surface, which generally is saltwater, from migrating up and contaminating the surface water that we use for irrigation and household and agricultural purposes. And it also prevents the surface water from draining into the hole a mile below the surface. So it's plugged at three different levels and this is done, of course, by companies that are equipped to force concrete down a hole a mile deep, and it is done under the supervision of field representatives of the Oil and Gas Commission, who are there to inspect and make sure that it is done properly. It's really a matter of protecting the surface water, the water that we rely on for irrigation and household and agricultural purposes.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay. And, as I understand it, one of the plugs is at the surface so as to prevent runoff or other kinds of contamination from going down the well that has been drilled.

SENATOR MATZKE: That's correct.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Is that accurate?

SENATOR MATZKE: That's correct.

SENATOR BEUTLER: Okay.