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## ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF EXPRESSWAY CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATIONS ON GROUNDWATER INTAKE

Date of submission:  
20.08.2023

Date of acceptance:  
7.09.2023

Date of publication:  
29.09.2023

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Expressways represent significant public investments contributing to the socio-economic development of a country. However, their construction and operations exert detrimental effects stemming from the road surface onto the adjacent groundwater environment.

To mitigate these adverse environmental consequences, extant legal restrictions are factored in during the expressway design phase, accompanied by the implementation of modern technical and organizational solutions. As a pivotal legal instrument, the environmental impact assessment is mandated in the procedural framework for obtaining approval on environmental conditions during expressway construction. The precision in evaluating the negative impact of an expressway on distinct environmental elements hinges on the depth of the assessment, influencing the nature and extent of planned protective measures.

In many instances, supplementary environmental risk assessments are conducted to bolster the investment process. This study aims at discerning the specific impact of expressway construction on nearby groundwater intake. To achieve this, an exhaustive assessment of contaminant migration times from the land surface to the aquifer and within the aquifer itself was executed. Subsequently, a proposal for aquifer monitoring was formulated based on the findings to enable the early detection of potential shifts in groundwater quality, facilitating timely preventive interventions.

**Keywords:** expressway, environmental impact, pollution migration, groundwater impact

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# 1. Introduction

Expressways represent significant public investments contributing to the socio-economic development of a country. However, their construction and operations exert detrimental effects on various environmental elements, notably impacting both the groundwater and surface water in their proximity. Liquid and solid pollutants emanating from vehicular activities are systematically washed from the road surface into the adjacent groundwater environment.

To mitigate these adverse environmental consequences, existing legal restrictions are factored in during the expressway design phase, accompanied by the implementation of modern technical and organizational solutions. As a pivotal legal instrument, the environmental impact assessment is mandated in the procedural framework for obtaining approval on environmental conditions during expressway construction. However, the precision in evaluating the negative impact of the expressway on individual environmental elements hinges on the depth of the assessment, thereby influencing the nature and extent of planned protective measures.

This challenge becomes particularly apparent when assessing the negative impact of a designed road on the

aquatic environment. Consequently, this article provides a practical example illustrating the calculation of migration times for pollutants from the land surface to the aquifer and within the aquifer itself. Leveraging the results of these calculations, the article proposes aquifer monitoring as a proactive measure for the early detection of potential changes in groundwater quality, facilitating prompt and effective preventive interventions.

# 2. Technical characteristics of the groundwater intake

This study investigates the hydrogeological characteristics and operational parameters of a groundwater intake system comprising four wells S-1, S-2, P-2, and P-3 (Fig. 1). The wells, situated at depths ranging from 17 to 20 m below sea level, draw water from an aquifer composed of gravels with pebbles [1, 2, 4, 5, 17, 18]. The study analyses key parameters, including aquifer thickness, filtration coefficient, and depression funnel radius, to assess the efficiency and sustainability of the groundwater extraction system.

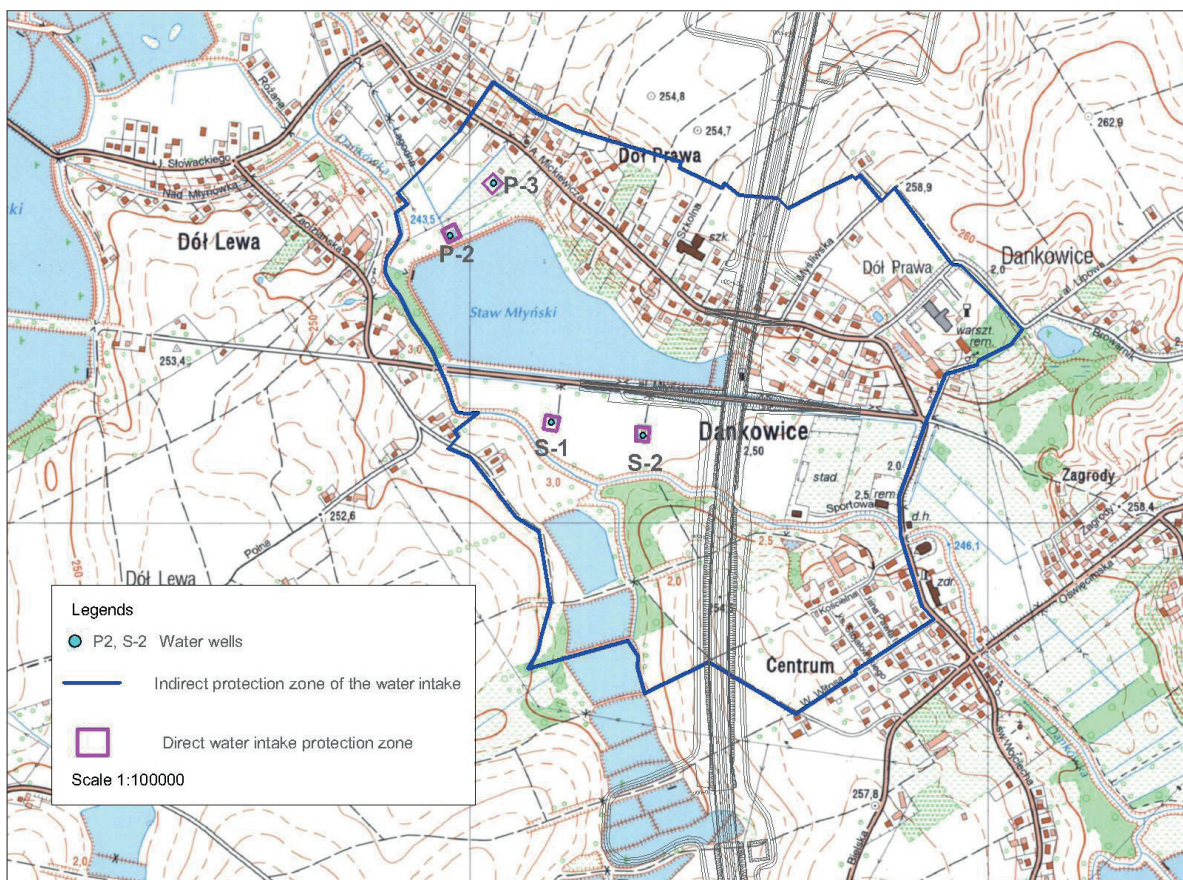


Fig. 1. Water well location in the vicinity of an expressway [4, 5]

### 3. Technical characteristics of the proposed expressway

The analysed section of the proposed expressway will traverse a newly planned corridor passing through the indirect protection zone of the underground water intake, agricultural areas, forested regions, and zones with dispersed development. It will be characterized by the following parameters [3, 13]:

- technical class: S 2/2 with a reserve for 2/3,
- design speed:  $V_p = 100$  km/h,
- authoritative speed:  $V_m = 110$  km/h,
- load:  $115 \text{ kN/m}^2$ ,
- normal section type: dual carriageway,
- carriageway width:  $2 \times 3.50$  m,
- dividing lane width: 12 m with  $2 \times 0.5$  m bands (with provision for a third lane),
- width of emergency lane: 2.50 m,
- width of hard shoulder: minimum 1.60 m,
- crown width: minimum 35 m.

For the designed section of the expressway within the zone of indirect protection of the underground water intake, a sealed rainwater drainage system has been planned [3, 13]. Its purpose is to collect water from the road surface, dividing strip, and shoulders. Rainwater and snowmelt will be directed outside the intermediate protection zone and undergo treatment to meet the legally required standards before discharge into the environment [3, 13]. Additionally, sealed roadside ditches will be implemented on both sides of the road to manage rainwater and snowmelt runoff from the embankments of the expressway.

The projected vehicle traffic for the first year of use along the section of the designed road in the intermediate zone of the intake is expected to be 35,934 vehicles per day [3].

### 4. The characterisation of the geological and hydrogeological conditions

The geological structure of the area comprises Carboniferous, Tertiary (Neogene), and Quaternary formations. The older subsoil consists of productive Carboniferous formations, lying at a depth of approximately 400 m. Lithologically, these formations are composed of claystone, siltstone, and sandstone accompanying coal seams [15].

Tertiary (Neogene) formations are represented by Miocene sediments, known as the Skawina strata, primarily consisting of clays, siltstones, with thin inserts of dust and sand. Their thickness varies, ranging from 350 to 380 m, depending on the floor formation of the Carboniferous formations [15].

Quaternary formations, directly on Miocene formations, include Pleistocene and Holocene sediments. Pleistocene sediments, associated with the Krakow glaciation, consist of a continuous layer of sand and gravel, with pebbles and gravels at the bottom. The average thickness of Pleistocene sand and gravel formations is about 7 m. Above these formations, cohesive and organic Holocene soils are found, with thicknesses varying from approximately 5.0 to 7.5 m [15]. The geological cross-section in the vicinity of the planned expressway is presented in Figure 2.

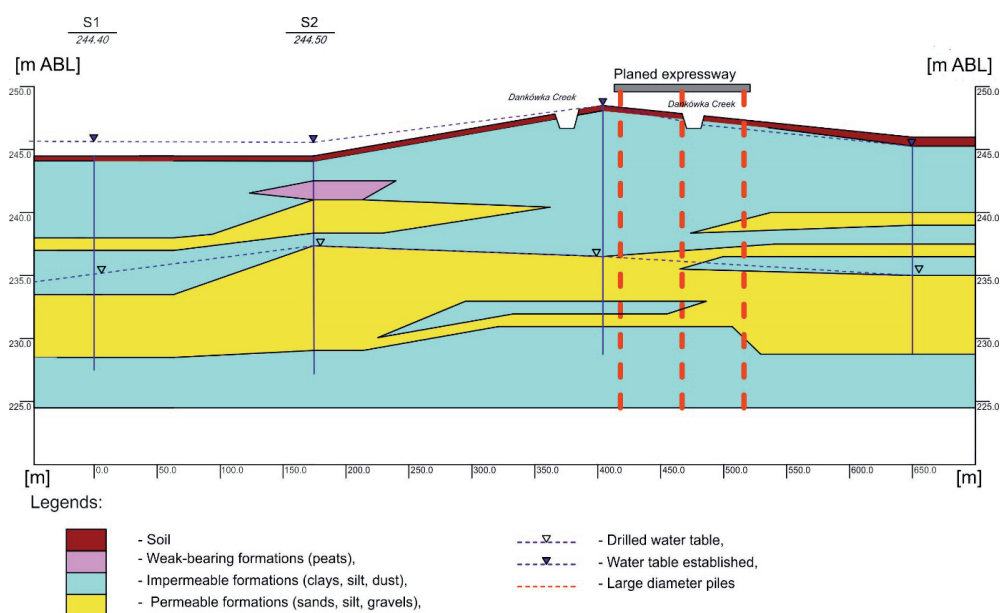


Fig. 2. Geological cross-section in the vicinity of the planned expressway [3, 15]

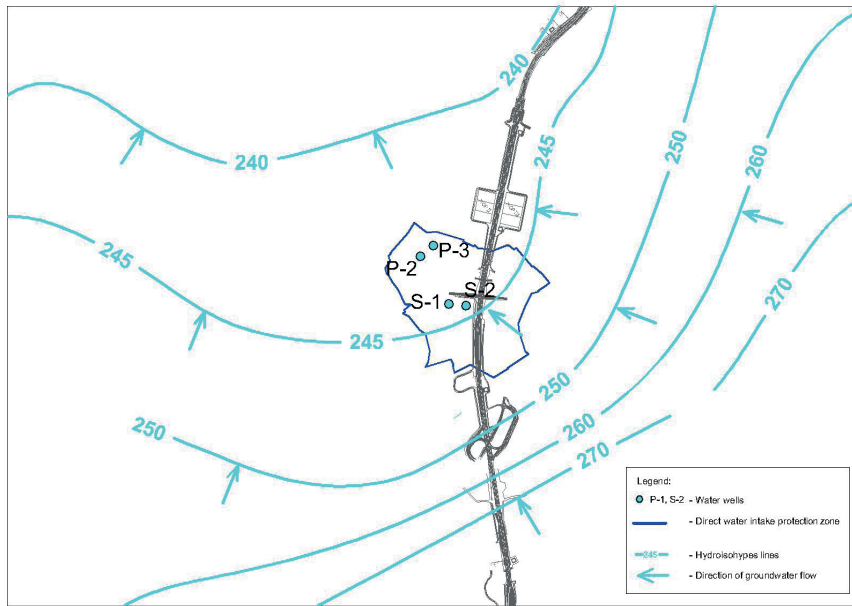


Fig. 3. The diagram shows the direction of groundwater flow [10]

Three main aquifers associated with permeable formations – Quaternary, Tertiary (Neogene), and Carboniferous – were identified in the area. Due to the impact of the planned expressway, the Quaternary aquifer, consisting of two layers of sand and gravel separated by layers of clay or dust, is crucial for analysis [9, 11, 15].

The hydrogeological map, based on current measurements from dug and drilled wells in the area, indicates that the water table generally follows the terrain configuration. It approaches the surface in downgradient areas and remains several metres below the terrain surface in upgradient areas. Groundwater flows from the south and southeast towards the north and northwest, i.e., toward the Vistula River, the primary drainage base, and locally towards smaller watercourses, as shown in Figure 3 [10]. The wells of the analysed water intake are unfavourably situated in the direction of water flow from the planned expressway location. Hydraulic gradients are generally low, ranging from  $I = 0.002$  to  $I = 0.01$  [1, 2].

## 5. Assessment of the migration time of contaminants from the land surface to and in the aquifer

To assess the migration time of potential pollutants that may infiltrate the aquifer due to the operation of the planned expressway in the indirect protection zone of the discussed water intake, calculations were conducted for both the time of seepage of pollutants from the land

surface and the time of migration of pollutants within the aquifer. The time of seepage from the land surface to the groundwater was determined using the N.N. Binde-man method, modified by T. Macioszczyk [12, 16].

Calculations of the vertical migration time ( $t$ ) of pollutants were conducted following the relationships outlined by Małecki [11, 12, 14, 16]:

$$t = \frac{m}{V_a} \text{ [year]} \quad (1)$$

where:

$m$  – thickness of the aeration zone [m],  
 $V_a$  – seepage velocity [m/year].

$$V_a = \frac{1}{W_o} \cdot \sqrt[3]{\omega^2} \quad (2)$$

where:

$W_o$  – volumetric moisture content [-],  
 $\omega$  – annual effective infiltration [m/year].

$$\omega = P \cdot w \quad (3)$$

where:

$P$  – annual rainfall [m/year],  
 $w$  – precipitation rate [-].

$$t = \frac{m \cdot W_o}{\sqrt[3]{(P \cdot w)^2 \cdot k}} \quad (4)$$

where:

$k$  – filtration coefficient of rocks in the aeration tre-phine [m/year].



The calculated time of vertical migration of contaminants from the land surface to the groundwater in the area of the designed road ranges between 5 and 23.1 years.

The analysis of contaminant migration time in the aquifer considered two scenarios [12]:

- variant I: decommissioned wells,
- variant II: exploitation of water by bored wells.

To determine the time for the migration of contaminants from the roadside ditch of the designed expressway in the scenario where both intake wells are decommissioned, the equation derived from Darcy's law was utilized. Through the transformation of Darcy's law, the formula for the migration velocity of contaminants in groundwater was obtained [12, 16]:

$$V = k \cdot I \quad (5)$$

where:

- $V$  – pore debris flow rate [m/day],
- $k$  – filtration coefficient – 26.52 m/day,
- $I$  – hydraulic gradient – 0.007 [-].

Taking into account the porosity of the aquifer rocks, the formula for flow velocity takes the form:

$$V_{actl} = \frac{V}{n_0} \quad (6)$$

where:

- $V_{actl}$  – actual pore contaminant velocity [m/day],
- $V$  – contaminant flow velocity in pores [m/day],
- $n_0$  – effective porosity of aquifer – 0.2.

To transform both equations, we derive the formula for the velocity of contaminants in the aquifer:

$$V_{actl} = \frac{k \cdot I}{n_0} = \frac{26.53 \cdot 0.007}{0.2} = 0.93 \text{ m/day} \quad (7)$$

The migration time of contaminants in groundwater was determined based on the equation:

$$t = \frac{L}{V_{actl}} = \frac{125.6}{0.93} = 136 \quad (8)$$

where:

- $t$  – migration time of contaminants in groundwater [day],
- $L$  – path travelled by groundwater – 125.6 m,
- $V_{actl}$  – actual pore contaminant flow velocity – 0.93 m/day.

Assuming a groundwater velocity of 0.93 m/day in the second aquifer captured by the wells, contaminants migrating with the groundwater are projected to reach well No. S-1, located 300 m away from the roadside ditch, in approximately 323 days.

The time of migration of contaminants in groundwater, while exploiting wells S-1 and S-2 was determined using the method developed by A. Kleczkowski [7, 8]. The calculations were conducted under the following assumed conditions [7, 8]:

- the aquifer is considered unconfined, isotropic, and homogeneous,
- water movement is steady, with water particles following the current lines,
- the pumping rate and groundwater flow are constant,
- contaminants do not sorb or react with the rock,
- dispersion of contaminants in the pore medium can be neglected (reciprocating flow).

A coordinate system was established based on hydroisohips, with the  $y$ -axis perpendicular to the direction of water flow (parallel to the hydroisohypse), and the  $x$ -axis directed upstream of the natural groundwater flow. The system's origin is positioned in the axis of the wellbore (Fig. 4).

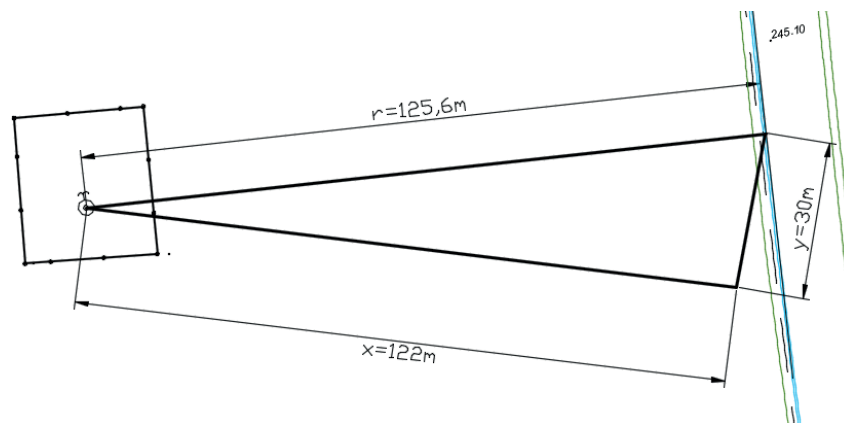


Fig. 4. Method of determining the values of  $x$ ,  $y$  and  $r$  using the Kleczkowski method [8]

To determine the migration time, the first step involves calculating the unit discharge of the natural groundwater stream and the auxiliary value  $r_0$ . The unit discharge  $q$  of the natural groundwater flux is determined by the formula [8]:

$$q = k \cdot m \cdot I = 26.52 \cdot 7 \cdot 0.007 = 1.3 \text{ m}^3/\text{day} \quad (9)$$

where:

- $k$  – aquifer filtration coefficient – 26.52 m/day,
- $m$  – thickness of aquifer – 7 m,
- $I$  – hydraulic gradient – 0.007 [–].

The auxiliary value of  $r_0$  is calculated from the formula [8]:

$$r_0 = \frac{Q}{2\pi q} = \frac{672}{2 \cdot 3.14 \cdot 1.3} = 82.3 \text{ m} \quad (10)$$

where:

- $Q$  – discharge of well No. 2 – 627 m<sup>3</sup>/day.

On the basis of Minkin’s nomogram, from the graph for the values  $x/y = 122/30 = 4.0$  and  $r/r_0 = 125.6/82.3 = 1.5$  it is possible to read the value of the dimensionless time  $t$  for the pollutant to reach the well, which is 3.7. The actual time for the pollutant to reach the well ( $t$ ) from the expressway ditch according to the formula will thus be [8]:

$$t = \frac{\tau \cdot n_0 \cdot m \cdot r_0^2}{Q} = \frac{3.7 \cdot 0.2 \cdot 7 \cdot 6773}{672} = 54 \quad (11)$$

where:

- $t$  – actual time for the pollutant to reach the well [day],
- $n_0$  – effective porosity of the aquifer – 0.2.

Calculations of contaminant migration in the aquifer reveal that the groundwater flow time from the ditch of the designed expressway to well No. 2 is 54 days. The groundwater flow velocity in the aquifer was determined based on the method by Kleczkowski [7, 8].

For well S-1, the migration velocity is assumed to be similar to that for well S-2 with a velocity of  $v = 2.32$  m/day. Given that the well is 300 m from the roadside ditch, and assuming well S-2 will be decommissioned, contaminants are expected to flow into the intake after a period of 130 days.

$$t = \frac{L}{v} = \frac{300}{2.2} = 129.3 \text{ day} \quad (12)$$

## 6. Groundwater risk assessment in the area of the analysed water intake

The degree of vulnerability of water to contamination is determined by assessing the approximate time it takes for contaminants to reach an aquifer from the land surface. By understanding the vertical migration time of contaminants from the land surface to individual aquifers, it becomes possible to evaluate the level of threat to the exploited groundwater intakes situated closest to the planned expressway. Table 1 illustrates the hazard classes and resistance of groundwater to contamination according to Kleczkowski [7].

After analysing the results of the vertical seepage time from the ground surface to the first and second aquifers in the considered area of the indirect groundwater intake protection zone, it is evident that the first aquifer belongs to the first or second groundwater hazard class [6]. However, since water from this aquifer is not being extracted, it is not relevant to the overall analysis.

Regarding the second aquifer, classified as a usable aquifer with a migration time of contaminants ranging from 5 to 22.5 years depending on the threat’s location, it is considered to be of medium groundwater vulnerability. Both its vulnerability class and resistance to pollution are classified as medium.

**Table 1.** Classes of threat and resistance of groundwaters to pollution [7]

The average time of water migration from of land surface to the top of the aquifer [years]	Symbol class	Hazard class of groundwater	Vulnerability class groundwater to contamination	Resistance class of groundwater to pollution
<2	A1	very severely under threat	very high	very low
2–5	A2	high risk	high	low
5–25	B	moderately endangered	medium	medium
25–100	C	low risk	low	high
>100	D	practically not threatened	very low	very high

Another method used in Poland to define groundwater vulnerability is the classification by the Polish Geological Institute in the Hydrogeological maps of Poland on a scale of 1 : 50,000. According to this method, three degrees of vulnerability to groundwater pollution are distinguished [10]:

- very high: <5 years,
- high: 5–25 years,
- medium: 25–50 years.

In accordance with the above, the first aquifer in the indirect protection zone of the Dankowice groundwater intake is classified as having a very high degree of susceptibility to contamination, whereas the second exploited one is classified as having a medium degree of susceptibility to contamination.

## 7. Summary

The calculations for the migration time of contaminants from the land surface to the aquifer indicate that the aquifer, from which groundwater is withdrawn by wells S-1 and S-22, is well isolated by a layer of clay. The vertical migration time of contaminants from the ground surface to wells S-1 and S-2 was determined to be 23 and 21.5 years, respectively. For the designed monitoring wells, allowing observation of changes in groundwater quality due to the operation of the designed expressway, the migration times are 14.5 and 22.5 years, respectively.

Calculations for the migration time of contaminants from a 2 m deep ditch were also performed, resulting in pollutant migration times of 5 and 12.7 years for the first and second aquifers, respectively. It

is important to note that contaminants with a density lower than water, such as petroleum hydrocarbons, will not have the opportunity to migrate from the first aquifer to the second. Only substances readily soluble in water will be able to migrate to the second aquifer [12].

The horizontal migration time of contaminants in the second aquifer was calculated for two scenarios: during the exploitation of groundwater by wells S-1 and S-2 and in the case of their decommissioning. In the case of exploitation, it is 130 days for well S-2 and 130 days for well S-1, respectively. When both wells are decommissioned, the contaminant migration time in the second aquifer will be 136 and 323 days. This high rate of contaminant migration in the aquifer is influenced by the geological structure, with the aquifer being exploited primarily consisting of gravels and sands with a very high filtration coefficient ( $k = 26.52$  m/day).

The calculations for contaminant migration emphasize that the vertical seepage time, ranging from 5 to 23 years depending on the calculation variant, predominantly influences the migration time of contaminants to groundwater. The potential migration of contaminants from the ditch to the aquifer exploited by wells S-1 and S-2 is estimated to be 5 years. Due to very small magnitudes (54 and 130 days), the time of horizontal migration of contaminants can be disregarded in the calculations, and it can be assumed that the total time of migration of contaminants to the wells equals the time of vertical migration.

**Acknowledgments:** The paper was performed within the framework of AGH University of Krakow statutory research grant No. 16.16.190.779 Faculty of Drilling, Oil and Gas, Department of Petroleum Engineering.

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