

Who owns underground and aboveground in US and Japan

Philip Womble et al. wrote an article entitled “Indigenous communities, groundwater opportunities” (1). Along with the progress of our society, laws have been changed/updated. The US property rights in the air aboveground are 360 feet (109.7m) in rural areas and 500 feet (152.4m) in urban and suburban areas respectively (2). Property rights belowground still extend “all the way to hell” (2). Therefore, when your city wants to build a subway beneath it, it needs to purchase an easement from you (2). The laws surrounding mineral rights including the right to extract oil, natural gas, or groundwater (1) are fairly complex (2). In Japan, land underground right is 40m and land aboveground right is 300m respectively. In order to resolve the complex problems, new rules must be created as soon as possible.

References:

1. Philip Womble et al., Indigenous communities, groundwater opportunities, Science 03 Aug 2018: Vol. 361, Issue 6401, pp. 453-455
2.
<https://www.quora.com/In-the-U-S-how-far-above-and-below-my-land-is-legally-owned-by-me>