

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee,

My name is Matthew Peterson. I am a farmer and rancher from Antler. I would first like to state that I am in favor of oil production but am extremely concerned about the care of the land and those that only have surface rights. Now on that matter my father and I have one of the largest salt spills in North Dakota on a piece of land that we rent; even though it is rented we treat it as our own. To have this devastation on "our" land is very disappointing and aggravating. It is disappointing in the fact that it happened and destroyed all the land it did but also aggravating that it seems no one cares! The acres "officially" affected are about 25. I have a hard time believing that the reported 300 barrels could do this much damage.

I have testified on this matter once before in front of a legislative committee where Mr. Helms stated it was not farmed in years past claiming it was always under water. I asked him later where he got his facts from and he said "Google Maps." In my opinion those are not facts, especially when the pictures are taken at random times of the year. I on the other hand have FSA files, spraying and seeding records proving otherwise.

As far as reclamation has gone there have been a few methods applied but with little results. The company that owns the line currently was prompt to repair the line breaks once discovered, but since their insurance company has stepped in, the process has been slow. We have already lost years of this land's potential productivity and will continue to in the years to come. Not only have we lost production value but now have the inefficiency of farming around the contaminated area. Prior to the spill we were able to farm the full mile stretch. This is very inefficient not only in the time but the extra fuel, seed, chemicals, and fertilizers wasted.

My concerns in this matter are that these types of situations are continuing and nothing is being done about it. The communication is one aspect that needs to drastically improve. Communication as a tenant has been very minimal and after the fact rather than proactive. It is my understanding as a tenant, that I am suppose to be contacted prior to entering onto the property. For example, I was driving by the field one day and found men with a backhoe already digging on a second leak with no forewarning at all. In other cases they have called us after the fact when the project has already been completed. An update to on goings before the fact would be nice. I feel it can only get worse if these issues are not addressed immediately. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Thank you for your time,

Matthew Peterson