

Just wanted to send you two pictures of another spill of saltwater and oil, 5: 30 pm July 29 by Antler at Murex inactive disposal well site.

Apparently old 400 barrel saltwater tank collapsed and spilled contents plus additional 400 barrel adjoining tank was spilled as well. Initial estimates by crews on site were 300 to 400 barrels oil and 200 to 400 barrels saltwater . We will wait and see what reported amounts are.

The spill ran about 600 feet across field and road ditch and through culvert. Spill ran off both sides of location (very inadequate dike).

Worn out equipment with no standards or maintenance is destroying too much productive Agriculture land .

(When this problem hits Bakken country in the future, we could lose hundreds of precious acres every day) .

Contrary to NDIC claims, spills in Bottineau County are not being thoroughly cleaned up.

See July 28 article in Ag week, article enclosed.

Daryl P

P.S. I was asked by landowner to witness and take pictures







## OPINION

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# Sound bytes versus smart regs

## ■ Taylor missed facts

By Doug Goehring

BISMARCK, N.D. — Many times, what sounds good is anything but easy.

Such is the case with the column by Ryan Taylor, the Democratic-NPL Party's candidate for North Dakota agriculture commissioner ("Hat-wearing leadership for N.D.").

Taylor's folksy, ah-shucks language might sound appealing and his solutions easy, but the realities of regulating our state's two largest industries are seldom so simple.

Take, for example, Taylor's recent attempt to make political hay with the very unfortunate brine spill at Mandaree, N.D. Taylor used this mishap to promote his "landowner bill of rights" and its mandate that pipelines use flow meters and pressure cutoff switches.

In his hurry to rush to judgment, Taylor forgets to check his facts. For one thing, the Mandaree spill happened on tribal

lands, where the state has very little regulatory authority.

More important, the pipeline responsible for this spill already was equipped with multiple flow meters and pressure cutoff switches, which highlights what I have said all along. These technologies are not very effective methods of preventing or limiting the impact of spills.

Another example of Taylor's feel-good politics that is, in reality, bad policy is his desire to mandate that all wells must be at least a quarter-mile away from occupied dwellings. It might sound good, but moving a well farther away from established roads sometimes does more harm to the land than necessary.

Rather than Taylor's one-size-fits-all solution, I want each permit evaluated individually and all the facts considered before deciding where to place a well site.

As for the rest of Taylor's "landowner's bill of rights," we already require reclamation of all land when oil companies are done. We already use the Ag Mediation Service to mediate disputes between landowners and energy companies.

And debate of the issues concerning

landowners already is done in full transparency at open public meetings of the North Dakota Industrial Commission, not in smoke-filled rooms as Taylor's fertile imagination would have readers believe.

No one wants spills to occur — not the pipeline company, not the state and not the landowner. But unfortunately, spills will happen. As regulators, our job is to make sure all reasonable safeguards are taken to prevent spills and, when spills do occur, that they are cleaned up and the land returned to productivity.

That is exactly what we are doing. We have employed best practices and technologies in the regulation of oil, gas and saltwater-gathering pipelines. In fact, we were the first state in the nation to regulate saltwater-gathering lines, and our rules have now been adopted by other states.

Even U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell called our oil and gas rules "sophisticated" compared with those in other states.

Let's be perfectly clear: The North Dakota Industrial Commission makes companies thoroughly clean up spills. The

only exception is where the clean-up would do more damage than good.

And if the company goes out of business before the clean-up is done, the state assumes the responsibility for the clean-up of the site, and we have set aside millions of dollars to accomplish that task.

To date, more than 99 percent of all spills reported since I took office are in the process of being cleaned up or have been cleaned up.

I have been a lifelong farmer in North Dakota. No one takes the responsibility of preserving our land more seriously than I do. Unlike Taylor, my opponent, I will not drive a wedge between agriculture and energy development in this state to further my political ambitions. These two industries both can thrive if we apply smart and common-sense regulations to the industries' development and management.

While my science-based approach to energy and ag regulation does not lend itself to folksy sound bytes, it is the right thing to do for the people of North Dakota.

*Editor's note: Goehring, a Republican, is North Dakota's commissioner of agriculture and is running for re-election in November.*

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