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THE \$53 BILLION QUESTION: WHO PAYS FOR CLEAN UP AFTER THE CHEVRON-HESS MERGER?

Subhead: Oil sites once owned by Hess now face an uncertain future

Bismarck, ND — Chevron's \$53 billion acquisition of Hess Corporation raises one of the biggest unanswered questions in North Dakota: Who will pay to clean up the land when the oil is gone?

Hess's legacy includes decades of vertical wells that left salt scars across farmland and newer frac wells built on sprawling concrete pads and gravel truck routes. When those frac wells, which have a short lifespan of 13 years, dry up, the infrastructure remains—and too often, so does the liability.

"The oil industry's business model depends on deferring cleanup," said Fintan Dooley, Executive Director of the Salt Contaminated Land and Water Council (SCLWC). "They transfer wells to smaller operators who eventually go bankrupt, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill."

SCLWC estimates Hess's North Dakota sites will require \$2.6 billion to \$5.2 billion for reclamation. But bonding requirements are less than 1% of even the state's estimated costs for reclamation. On the other hand, 1% of revenues generated in a year would cover the cost of cleanup. SCLWC is calling on regulators to require Chevron to deposit cleanup funds in escrow before continuing any operations.

"Oil extraction of any kind takes a serious toll on the land," Dooley said. "Without pressure and enforcement, we'll be left with the same result—contaminated soil, hardened drill pads, and no accountability." Who would have to pay for the soil reclamation then?

For details, visit www.ReviveTheDeadLands.org.

ABOUT SALT CONTAMINATED LAND & WATER COUNCIL: SCLWC is an educational non-profit organized to raise awareness for the importance of land stewardship for salt contaminated lands caused by oil production.

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