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DAKOTA COUNSEL

Watchdogs of the Prairie

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No Room for NDAs

North Dakota lawmakers gathered in Bismarck this September for a special session as the rapid expansion of multibillion dollar data centers quickly stole the spotlight. While legislative leadership wanted to keep business strictly focused elsewhere, mounting frustration from communities forced the issue onto the floor.

Senator Tim Mathern introduced Senate Bill 2406 to ban government officials from signing nondisclosure agreements with data center developers and other industrial corporations. The premise was simple: secrets destroy public trust. Across our state, communities continue to get blindsided by proposals and land options for data centers and power plants that often take active farmland out of production and require huge amounts of grid power - all before the public ever hears a word.

Despite very clear public sentiment, the Senate voted 32 to 15 to defeat SB 2406. Several lawmakers claim that existing open record laws are plenty while others argue that a short three day session offered too little time to sort out statutory language. Some even attempted to write off community concerns about public health and local infrastructure as propaganda and fear.

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Letter From the Chair

I have been around Dakota Resource Council for a long time. If there is one thing I have learned over the years, the issues might change but the fundamental need for everyday folks to stand together never does.

Right now, we are seeing that battle play out with data centers.

These massive industrial outfits are descending on small towns all across North Dakota. They move fast, locking down deals long before neighbors can get straight answers about electric bills, water supplies, constant noise, ruined roads and what happens to our hometowns twenty or thirty years down the trail.

Our members and field organizers are doing what this organization has done from day one. We are knocking on doors, packing school gyms, gathering petition signatures and making sure our friends and neighbors have the tools to demand a seat at the table.

I take a heck of a lot of pride in that work.

We are not arguing that communities must freeze in amber or that growth is always the enemy. We are standing on a basic North Dakota principle: the people who live here and pay the taxes ought to have the final say in what happens here.

That belief sits at the dead center of DRC history.

Just recently, we lost a true champion who understood that truth in his bones.

David Schwalbe was a steadfast ally to DRC and a dear personal friend to so many of us.

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Executive Committee

Linda Weiss, Chair
Vacant, Vice Chair
Curt Stofferahn, Past Chair
April Fairfield, Secretary
Garret Zastoupil, Treasurer

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Jenna Vanhorne
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Region 2 - Tracy Potter
Region 3 - Vacant
Region 4 - Shelley Lenz
Region 5 - Vacant

DRC Regions

Region 1 covers eastern North Dakota, including the Red River Valley and communities around Fargo and Grand Forks.

Region 2 includes much of south central North Dakota, including Bismarck, Jamestown, and surrounding rural counties.

Region 3 spans north central and northeastern North Dakota, including the Minot and Devils Lake areas.

Region 4 covers western and southwestern North Dakota, including Dickinson, Williston outside the Fort Berthold Reservation, and the Badlands region.

Region 5 is dedicated entirely to the Fort Berthold Reservation, recognizing its unique geography, sovereignty, and organizing history.

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(COVER STORY CONTINUED)
A floor defeat is disappointing, but forcing this debate into daylight marks an important organizing milestone. Lawmakers had to go on record defending closed door negotiations with the momentum of public opinion showing no signs of slowing down. Our members are building pressure for the regular 2027 session - demanding comprehensive reclamation plans, bonding, true local zoning authority, and an end to corporate secrecy. Public servants work for the people, not outside tech developers.

Data Centers

Building Power Across North Dakota

Watching lawmakers pack up and leave Bismarck without passing meaningful data center protections was not a surprise, but still a gut punch for many across the state. Despite strong testimony and clear calls from local communities to apply the brakes on such rapid development, the legislature once again chose corporate convenience over public oversight.

That inaction has sent a clear signal to everyday citizens: if we want accountability, we will build it ourselves. DRC is working with concerned members, landowners, and community leaders across all regions in North Dakota impacted by data centers to launch a statewide coalition. From the Red River Valley through south-central counties and out west, people facing similar concerns are breaking out of regional silos to share knowledge and pool resources. For too long, developers have counted on dividing communities and dealing with small towns one by one. That strategy stops now.

A recent strategy session brought together dozens of voices from across the state. Neighbors shared experiences working with local officials on ordinance language and rising utility concerns. Solutions were also brought to the table. Working groups have begun research to support proposals for local and statewide data center work that will build local power, protect our shared natural resources, and bring more transparency and public participation to the local decision making process.

We know that the road ahead is uncertain; that the corporations pushing for this growth have a much larger amount of money and power. But the building collective voice of citizens who care deeply about
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(LETTER FROM THE CHAIR CONTINUED)
David was sharp, deeply curious, relentlessly stubborn in the best way and never once flinched from asking the tough questions. If something smelled off, David dug in until he figured out why. Once he grasped the facts, he turned straight to the only question that counts: what are we going to do about it?

He poured that fighting spirit into DRC for a decade. Whether he was standing up for independent family ranchers, taking on the meatpackers for country of origin labeling or demanding real ethics and accountability from politicians in Bismarck, David showed up.

Losing him leaves a tremendous hole in our ranks.

Saying goodbye to a brother like David reminds me why this organization matters so much. Most folks are flat out busy. They are working long shifts, running livestock, getting crops in, raising kids and trying to keep their heads above water. When a multinational conglomerate backed by billions rolls into town aiming to reshape a rural county, taking that fight on by yourself feels impossible.

Nobody in North Dakota should ever have to stand alone against that kind of power.

That is why DRC exists.

For nearly fifty years, regular people have linked arms through this outfit because they realized power comes in numbers. A single landowner asking questions gets brushed off. A packed room of angry neighbors asking those same questions cannot be ignored.

David knew that in his gut. Generations of grassroots members have known it too.

As we honor David memory and carry on organizing across every corner of this state, I am profoundly grateful for each and every person who keeps showing up.

The threats facing our state are massive, but the grit of the people who make up DRC is a whole lot bigger.

Linda Weiss
Acting Chair, Dakota Resource Council

(BUILDING POWER CONTINUED)
protecting North Dakota is getting louder, and I think, harder for the legislative body to continue dismissing.

Mandan Residents Use Home Rule to Push for Limits on Large Data Centers

Mandan residents are taking local control into their own hands, using the city home rule charter to establish clear boundaries on large data center development. On September 14, local residents and supporters held a press conference to publicly announce the citizen led initiative.

Dakota Resource Council is proud to support this effort by assisting with legal research, navigating charter authorities, helping draft measure language and providing organizing tools. From the beginning, everyday folks living in Mandan have driven this work because they want a direct say in how heavy development shapes their neighborhoods.

The proposed amendment sets a firm cap, prohibiting any facility larger than 25 megawatts within city limits. The goal is not stopping regular commercial growth or everyday tech business. Instead, residents want common sense limits on massive hyperscale campuses whose extreme power draws, water usage, noise levels and infrastructure burdens fundamentally change a community.

Rather than constantly reacting to developer proposals after deals get cooked up in private, residents are setting proactive ground rules. At the press conference, neighbors made their case plain: the people living in Mandan ought to decide what kind of growth fits their town.

Our role at DRC remains purely supportive. We offer technical help, statutory guidance, petition training and strategic backing, but Mandan citizens call the shots. Local people are having face to face conversations on porches, gathering petition signatures, shaping policy priorities and leading the charge at public meetings.

That commitment reflects DRC core values. We do not roll into towns telling folks what to do. We help neighbors organize, build power and defend their quality of life against corporate pressure.

Putting this decision on the ballot gives voters the final word on whether Mandan should cap data centers at 25 megawatts. That is authentic grassroots democracy: local leadership, neighbor to neighbor organizing and communities steering their own destiny.

Fort Berthold Talks Data Centers

This September, Dakota Resource Council teamed up with Honor the Earth and Fort Berthold POWER to host a series of community meetings on the surge of data center development across North Dakota.

We brought these discussions directly to Fort Berthold Reservation communities, stopping in New Town/Four Bears, Mandaree, Twin Buttes, White Shield and Parshall. Presenters broke down the massive power and water needs of large facilities, walked through potential impacts on neighbors and shared takeaways from other North Dakota towns already navigating these proposals.

Most of all, these sessions gave folks room to ask hard questions and talk through the safeguards our communities need before any project gets the green light.

DRC has always stood for everyday people having clear information and real say before heavy industry moves in next door. With data center plans popping up all over the state, we will keep standing alongside our local and Tribal partners to demand real transparency, local control and strong protections for residents.

Oil & Gas

A Decade Later, Davis Refinery Is Still Looking for Investors

Nearly a decade after Meridian Energy Group first proposed the Davis Refinery right next door to Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the company is still passing around the hat.

Meridian is out looking for 95 million dollars from private investors while scrambling for project financing on the 49,500 barrel per day refinery. Beyond moving some dirt around on preliminary site prep, nothing has been built.

For Dakota Resource Council, ten years of broken promises and foot dragging points to an obvious conclusion: an unbuilt phantom project should not be allowed to squat on environmental permits forever.

Permits exist to guide actual construction under active standards, not to grant speculative developers a perpetual green light while financial backing remains a fantasy.

DRC opposed putting an industrial oil refinery on the doorstep of our state national park from day one. After a full decade of failure to launch, state regulators must revoke Meridian existing permits and force them to start from scratch under modern environmental rules.

If Wall Street and private equity refuse to sink their own cash into this boondoggle, North Dakota taxpayers and the state Legacy Fund sure as hell should not be left holding the bag.

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DAKOTA RESOURCE COUNCIL

Clean Energy

DRC Opposes Rollback of Regional Haze Protections

Dakota Resource Council is pushing back hard against the Environmental Protection Agency as the agency moves to gut Regional Haze protections across North Dakota.

EPA wants to do a complete about face on its 2024 partial rejection of the state weak compliance plan, rubber stamping a proposal that lets big polluters off the hook. The Regional Haze program under the Clean Air Act exists for a basic reason: holding states accountable for industrial smog that chokes out clear skies over national parks and wilderness areas.

For our state, that means defending places like Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the Badlands from dirty air.

Corporate lobbyists and compliant regulators want us to swallow a tired old false choice between affordable power and clean air. Everyday people know better. We can and must demand both.

Coal powered our communities for generations, but past history does not give heavy industrial operators a permanent pass to dump pollution into the wind when proven control technologies sit ready to use.

Clear western skies and sweeping Badlands views belong to every North Dakotan who calls this state home. Federal rules should look out for public health and natural heritage, not get watered down just to protect balance sheets for corporate polluters.

DRC will keep standing up against attempts to roll back these commonsense standards because our air, public lands and open horizons are not for sale.

Clean Energy Projects Pile in to Cass County

Over the last year, we have highlighted the potential explosion of energy development in Cass County, as the population continues to boom and the area continues to develop as a regional transmission hub. Several new projects are now known to the public. In addition to the under-construction Harmony I solar array, Geronimo also has Harmony Solar II under development, which at 400 MW, will be twice the size of the original. Geronimo also has a large battery under development near the Bison transmission station, and a wind project near Page. Minnkota also has both a battery project and a natural gas peaking plant near the Bison Generation Station. Two additional projects by Hecate Energy were uncovered, a 500 MW solar array in Cass County, and a 350 MW solar array near Dickinson.

Around the state, Harmony Solar I and Abercrombie Solar are both now under construction, the former after 7 years of delay. Minnesota Power's Longspur Wind project has been approved after a contentious hearing, and Oliver IV and Badger Wind near completion and onlining. Homestead Wind in Williams County will go before the PSC at the end of September.

North Dakota Clean Energy Project Tracker

Under Construction

- Oliver IV Wind — 200 MW | Oliver County | NextEra (No CBA)
- Badger Wind — 262 MW | Emmons County | Orsted Onshore (No CBA)
- Harmony Solar — 200 MW | Cass County | Geronimo (No CBA)
- Abercrombie Solar — 300 MW | Richland County | Savion / Otter Tail Power (No CBA)

Approved & Final Approvals

- Longspur Wind — 200 MW | Mercer & Morton Counties | Allete / MN Power (*Approved*)
- Flickertail Wind I & II — 600 MW total (400 MW + 200 MW) | Eddy & Wells Counties | PRC Wind (CBA: *Yes*)
- Red Butte Wind — 200 MW | Oliver County | NextEra (No CBA)
- Buffalo Solar — 192 MW | Stutsman County | New Leaf (No CBA)
- Homestead Wind — 250 MW | Williams County | Apex (No CBA)

(CLEAN ENERGY TRACKER CONTINUED PG 7)

(CLEAN ENERGY TRACKER CONTINUED)

In Development

- Harmony Solar II — 400 MW | Cass County | Geronimo
- Unnamed Solar (Hecate) — 500 MW | Cass County | Hecate Energy
- Meadowlark Solar — 350 MW | Stark County | Hecate Energy
- New Salem 1 & 2 Wind — up to 375 MW | Morton & Oliver Counties | NextEra
- Blizzard Wind Farm — up to 300 MW | Dunn County | NextEra
- Prairie Wind — 200 MW | Grand Forks & Nelson Counties | NextEra
- Ruso Wind — 200 MW | McLean County | PRC Wind
- Unnamed Wind (Stutsman) — 200 MW | Stutsman County | NextEra
- Dickey/LaMoure Wind Projects — Invenergy & EDF Renewables (MW TBD)
- Burleigh Wind Project — PRC Wind (MW TBD)
- Bison & Harmony Storage — Battery projects planned in Cass County by Minnkota & Geronimo
- Prosperity Wind — Cass County | Geronimo (MW TBD)

Delayed / Defeated

- Cattle Creek Solar — 150 MW | McKenzie County | ibVEnergy

Nuclear is Getting Hot Again, Here's What You Need to Know

Small Modular Reactors (SMR) are a type of nuclear reactor being developed by multiple firms (reputable and not). The most recently developed nuclear reactors in the United States, Vogtle Electric Generating Plant Units 3 & 4, were a financial debacle, driving developer Westinghouse into bankruptcy, prompting the federal government to forgive billions in loans, and causing years of delays. Industry responded by looking at ways to bring the benefits of industrial mass production to the nuclear industry, by making reactors much smaller than the enormous 1100 MW Westinghouse AP-1000. This would also benefit developers by making them viable for smaller and remote installations, and even nuclear-powered cargo vessels, in theory a major benefit against climate change.

Small Modular Reactors were first conceived in the early 1950s for similar reasons as today: to limit financial risk and gain economies of scale in production. They have been used by the US Navy for years, which has a standard design for its modern carriers, the 125 MW A1B designed by Bechtel. Russia's Rosatom has constructed a 300 MW SMR reactor for a remote community, with more under development.

The current wave is mostly being developed by new entrants, many of them tied to Silicon Valley, including many funded directly by data center and AI companies, and are specifically targeted to data centers. These firms often use experimental and untried technologies, such as molten salt reactors, lead-cooled reactors, and others.

More than 100 firms worldwide have SMR reactors under development, ranging from 300 MW to 1 MW. Several are under construction, mostly from established firms. These include four 300 MW BWRX-300 reactors from GE-Hitachi Nuclear Energy, 125 MW ACP100 reactors from the Chinese National Nuclear Corporation, and Bechtel A1B reactors for upcoming US aircraft carriers.

With so many reactors and so many developers, experts are rightly concerned with the risk of accidents and terrorism, as well as the consequences if many of the firms inevitably fail. OpenAI, for instance, backed a 75 MW project that is under construction at the Idaho National Laboratory. It remains contested whether SMR's can even achieve competitive energy economics at all.

With the exception of the best-financed and institutionally credible developers, most of these appear doomed, as the path of nuclear appears to be Large Modular Reactors, specifically the mass-production of the Westinghouse AP-1000 reactor and its Korean and Chinese derivatives. The Trump administration recently announced $10 billion in federal funding for the next ten AP-1000 reactors built in the United States, which builds the pipeline for this model well into the twenties. The Chinese

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(NUCLEAR POWER CONTINUED)
CAP-1000 variant has a similarly sized queue, and reporting indicates that the price economics on these models rival the best solar regions, which is currently the cheapest $/Watthour generating source for most of the people on Earth. These reactors, as well as Rosatom's VVER-1200, the China General Nuclear Group's Hualong-One, and Energy de France & Siemans EPR2 all have double-digit production queues. To fill the need for smaller mass-produced reactors, Westinghouse also has a 300 MW reactor under development.

It appears that our wise and learned state leadership is as infatuated with the SMR hype as they are with data centers, and we will likely have a statewide conversation about this technology soon. We recommend rejecting this industry.

Agriculture

Landowners Denied Their Day in Court Over Wahpeton Water Sale

For farm families living near Wahpeton, the battle over Riverview's proposed 12,500 head Abercrombie Dairy boils down to one critical question: Will there be enough water left for the multi-generational operations that already depend on it?

So far, state regulators and the legal system have slammed the courthouse door in their faces.

On July 30, an administrative law judge threw out a formal challenge brought by Dakota Resource Council alongside eight rural landowners across Richland County in North Dakota and Wilkin County in Minnesota. That challenge took direct aim at the North Dakota Department of Water Resources for greenlighting a deal that hands the City of Wahpeton up to 500,000 gallons of precious water each day for Riverview's massive facility.

Every drop of that water that comes out of the Wahpeton Buried Valley Aquifer, the exact same underground reservoir local farmers and homeowners rely on to make a living.

What makes this dismissal so offensive is what was never allowed into daylight. The judge did not toss this case because the state proved the aquifer could easily handle millions of gallons in new pumping.

The case was killed before landowners could even present their expert evidence at a scheduled August evidentiary hearing.

State officials hid behind narrow legal technicalities, claiming rural landowners lack legal standing simply because they live outside city limits and haven't run dry yet. The state also pointed fingers, claiming the city holds all the blame for selling the water rather than the state agency that approved it.

That bureaucratic dodge puts every rural landowner in an impossible trap. If everyday farm families cannot challenge reckless water giveaways until their own home wells run completely dry, then North Dakota water protections are not worth the paper they are printed on.

A Major Step for MCOOL

Cattle on the Travis Anderson Ranch

In a hard fought 12 to 11 vote on September 17, the Senate Agriculture Committee advanced its draft of the Farm Bill to the full Senate floor. Tucked inside that package is an amendment that independent cattle producers across North Dakota have spent years demanding: the restoration of mandatory country of origin labeling, known as MCOOL, for beef.

For North Dakota ranchers running cow calf operations from the Red River Valley out across the western range, this vote marks a tremendous breakthrough.

Ever since Congress repealed MCOOL back in 2015, the multinational meatpacking cartel has enjoyed an open license to deceive American consumers. Under current loopholes, foreign beef imported from
(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

(MCOOL CONTINUED)
places like Brazil, Australia or Mexico can be shipped into this country, minimally processed or packaged here and slapped with misleading labels. That rigged marketplace hurts everybody. Shoppers pay premium prices thinking they are buying wholesome domestic meat while our local producers get undercut by cheap imported cattle.

Restoring mandatory labeling levels the playing field. It gives consumers clear, honest information at the grocery store meat case while allowing American ranchers to properly distinguish their superior product in the open market. North Dakota producers put everything they have into raising high quality cattle, adhering to strict safety and animal welfare standards. They deserve to be recognized for that work, not forced to compete against uninspected foreign imports hidden behind deceptive packaging.

Passing this amendment out of committee is a massive step forward, but the corporate lobby is already pouring money into killing it before the full Senate votes. DRC members know we cannot let down our guard. It is time to contact our congressional delegation, sign the petition and demand our leaders stand with independent family ranchers instead of corporate meatpackers.

DRC News & Notes

DRC Opposes Measure 1: Majority Rule Matters

Dakota Resource Council is standing firmly against Measure 1, a blatant attempt to rig future constitutional amendments by requiring a 60% supermajority instead of a straightforward vote.

For our members, the math is not complicated: 50% plus one is a majority. In a real democracy, the majority wins.

North Dakota built one of the proudest traditions of direct citizen democracy anywhere in this country. For over a century, everyday folks have turned to the citizen initiative whenever career politicians in Bismarck dragged their feet or flat out refused to act. Measure 1 cuts that power off at the knees, letting a minority of barely 40% overrule the will of nearly 60% of the electorate.

That danger is far from academic. Some of the most critical reforms in our state history would have died on the vine under these rigged rules. Even the 2018 constitutional amendment creating North Dakota independent Ethics Commission passed with 53.6% of the vote. Under Measure 1, that grassroots victory never happens.

Moving the goalposts only serves one purpose: locking everyday citizens out while handing deep pocketed corporate lobbyists an easy path to kill reforms before they start.

Our state constitution belongs to the people living here, not politicians or special interests. DRC urges every North Dakotan to defend grassroots democracy, protect majority rule and vote NO on Measure 1 this November.

Talon Metals Drops North Dakota Plans

Talon Metals pulled the plug on its proposed battery minerals processing facility near Beulah, quietly walking away from a deal once hyped as an economic miracle for Mercer County.

For Dakota Resource Council, this sudden retreat holds an essential lesson for the entire state.

Time and again, small towns get pressured to bend over backwards for heavy industrial schemes based on flashy promises of boomtown jobs, new tax revenues and guaranteed prosperity. Talon walking out the door proves just how fast a corporate tune can change after local leaders and state agencies burn months of public time and energy rolling out the red carpet.
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(TALON METALS CONTINUED)
North Dakota needs to build its economic foundation around the people who actually live here, not around the fickle whims of outside corporations.

Real economic strength means shielding taxpayers from reckless financial gambles, keeping land and water protected, demanding complete corporate daylight and making damn sure local communities keep their hands on the wheel.

DRC stands for responsible growth that brings real, lasting benefits to our neighbors. It should never mean asking rural families to shoulder every bit of the risk while out of state executives hold all the cards and the right to pack up whenever it suits them.

Outside outfits show up and move along when the wind changes. Our farms, drinking water, towns and the choices we make to protect them are the only things that will be standing when the dust clears.

Letter: Don't let Burgum and Interior Department Silence Split-estate Landowners

By Donald Nelson

I am a third-generation farmer and rancher caring for land near Keene in western North Dakota. Like many of my neighbors, I'm a split-estate landowner. That means I own the surface of my property, but the federal government owns some of the minerals beneath it.

Most people don't realize what that means until it's too late.

Imagine getting a call from an oil company telling you it has leased to drill beneath your property. They want to talk about where they'll build roads, well pads, pipeline, and other infrastructure. It's the first you've heard about the lease because no one told you the government was planning to lease it. You never had a chance to ask questions or object. By then, the decision has already been made.

That's the future Secretary Doug Burgum is proposing for thousands of landowners across the West.

The Interior Department wants to eliminate a simple but important protection in the Bureau of Land Management's 2024 Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Rule. Today, split-estate landowners receive notice before the federal government leases the minerals beneath their land. Burgum's proposal would require notification only after the lease has already been sold, when our opportunity to participate has effectively disappeared.

The administration says notifying landowners places an unnecessary burden on the oil and gas industry. I see it differently. The real burden falls on the families who have to live with the consequences. Drilling can bring heavy truck traffic, dust, noise, impacts to water, and disruptions that affect ranching operations for years. Those aren't inconveniences; they are costs to our livelihood and changes to the places we call home.

The proposal would also shorten the public comment period for lease sales from 90 days to just 10. That's barely enough time for rural landowners to learn what's happening, let alone understand the impacts and submit meaningful comments.

At the same time, growing energy demand—including from massive new data centers—is increasing pressure for more oil and gas development. Areas that once seemed unlikely to face new drilling could soon find themselves in the crosshairs.

The proposal also cuts already inadequate financial bonding requirements to just $10,000 for a single lease that will involve multiple sites, even though plugging just one well and reclaiming a site can cost $500,000 or more. If companies walk away, taxpayers could once again be left paying the bill.

This isn't about stopping responsible energy development. It's about basic fairness. Landowners deserve to know what's happening on their own property before decisions are made—not after.

Secretary Burgum often talks about standing up for rural America. Rural Americans deserve a voice, not fewer rights. The protections in the 2024 leasing rule should remain in place so split-estate landowners like me have an opportunity to be heard before our future is decided.

Donald Nelson is a longtime member of Dakota Resource Council, the founder of Salted Lands Council, and a split-estate landowner from Keene, North Dakota, in the Dakota Prairie Grasslands.

Letter: Weakening Bonds, Weakening Trust: The Danger of BLM's Proposed Rollback

By Lisa DeVille

A step backwards for tribal nations, and our land.

I am deeply disappointed by the Bureau of Land Management's proposal to roll back commonsense oil and gas bonding and reclamation protections.

For those of us who live in oil-producing communities, reclamation is not an abstract policy debate. We live with the wells, roads, pipelines, spills, and impacts to our land and water long after the drilling rigs move on.

The 2024 BLM rule finally updated bonding requirements that had gone largely unchanged for decades, increasing minimum bonds to better reflect the actual cost of plugging wells and reclaiming the land. Now, BLM is proposing to reduce those minimums from $150,000 to just $10,000 for an individual lease and from $500,000 to $25,000 for a statewide bond.

That is a major step backward. Not good for North Dakota.

As someone from the Fort Berthold Reservation, I have seen firsthand what happens when oil and gas development moves forward without adequate accountability. When companies walk away from their responsibilities, the land does not simply heal itself—and taxpayers and communities should not be left holding the bill.

I support responsible energy development. But responsible development means that the companies profiting from our natural resources must also be responsible for cleaning up after themselves.

We should be strengthening protections for landowners, Tribal nations, taxpayers, our water, and future generations, not weakening them.

If you make the mess, you should pay to clean it up. It really is that simple.

Landowner Resistance Forces Summit to Drop Two Storage Sites, but the Fight Continues

When neighbors organize to defend their land and property rights, even massive corporations are forced to retreat. In recent filings with the North Dakota Supreme Court, Summit Carbon Solutions surrendered two of its three proposed underground carbon storage permits in central North Dakota. After years of sustained resistance from local farmers and rural communities, the company abandoned its plans for the sites known as Summit 1 and Summit 2.

This pullback follows a landmark district court decision earlier this year that threw out all three storage permits. Summit walked away from the areas where community opposition was fiercest, choosing to abandon two thirds of its original storage footprint across Mercer, McLean and Oliver counties rather than face united landowners.

However, this victory requires continued vigilance. Summit is doubling down on its legal push for Summit 3, where only one landowner remains in litigation. Even as the company looks toward storage sites in Wyoming, executives made it clear they plan to sit on their North Dakota easements and route approvals for future exploitation. With key lawsuits challenging pipeline permits and state storage laws still pending, Dakota Resource Council members will continue standing shoulder to shoulder with landowners until every community is protected.

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I want to join Dakota Resource Council and affect positive change in North Dakota!

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