



Op-Ed for Immediate Release
January 12, 2023

The Future of Oil and Natural Gas Industry in North Dakota Is Bright
By Ron Ness, President North Dakota Petroleum Council

We all benefit from a strong oil and natural gas industry. The billions of dollars in taxes and royalties paid to the State of North Dakota each year pay for education, infrastructure, and social services across our great state. In fact, over 50% of all tax revenue collected by North Dakota is paid by the oil industry. We also employ almost 50,000 people in high-paying jobs and careers. And the oil we produce here helps make our nation more energy secure and less dependent on unfriendly foreign suppliers.

Industry investments in the North Dakota Bakken oilfield continue to be strong. We have a stable rig count and the number of producing wells continues to increase. North Dakota Department of Mineral Resources reported that our state recorded a new all-time high of 18,619 wells averaging 1.245 million barrels of oil per day in October 2023.

New technologies continually reduce the effects of drilling for and producing oil. Three-mile lateral wells, advances in innovation, improved practices, and inventions have helped our industry lessen our impact on the environment while increasing the efficiency of exploration and drilling activities. North Dakota oil and natural gas companies lead the world in the design and implementation of clean and efficient oil and gas exploration, development, and production technologies.

North Dakota producers are now using satellites, global positioning systems, remote sensing devices, unmanned aerial aircraft, and 3-D seismic technologies to assist with oil recovery, resulting in fewer exploratory wells. The adoption of emerging technologies such as AI and real-time analytics is expected to pick up as companies seek to enhance environmental safeguards and operational efficiency.

The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that up to 3.3 billion barrels of undiscovered, technically recoverable oil are still available in the Bakken Formation. Industry experts are even more optimistic and estimate the recoverable oil left in the Bakken is more like seven to ten billion barrels of oil. New technologies are opening the door for our state to take advantage of this great natural resource to the benefit of North Dakota and the nation.

The key to the long-term, environmentally sound, and efficient production of the Bakken resource is the use of new and evolving technologies. The use of EOR (enhanced oil recovery) techniques is critical to our future success. By injecting CO₂ in wells as they decline in



productivity, EOR will substantially extend the life of a well and the amount of oil that can be recovered from that well.

Improvements in horizontal and directional drilling technology, including new three-mile lateral wells, will make it possible for a single well to produce oil from a much larger area. Doing so reduces the number of wells necessary to develop the Bakken's tremendous oil resource while further protecting wildlife and the Bakken's natural beauty.

The Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) has also developed the Bakken Production Optimization Program which shows how state lawmakers, state regulators, landowners and the industry can work together for the benefit of mineral owners, shareholders, and taxpayers.

We are looking forward to another good year in North Dakota's oil industry. In fact, we will be celebrating the milestone of having produced five billion barrels of oil in the Bakken by mid-year in 2024. Come join the celebration at the Williston Basin Petroleum Conference on May 14-16, 2024, at the Bismarck Event Center. We will be showcasing our industry, its leaders, its best practices, and new technologies coming soon to the oil and gas industry. Learn more at wbpcnd.com.

