

Acknowledgement of Reclamation Program Landowner Information Letter

The Ministry of Energy and Resources (ER) is the governing body that regulates the remediation, reclamation and closure of upstream oil and gas well and facility sites in Saskatchewan through the Acknowledgement of Reclamation Program (AOR). This program mandates oil/gas companies (licensees) to remediate and reclaim former oil and gas sites to regulatory standards. Licensees must retain third-party consultants to conduct and document the work. The documentation is then submitted to ER for review. If all regulatory requirements have been met, ER will issue an AOR to the licensee which provides them with regulatory closure.

The purpose of this information letter is to provide you, the landowner, with essential information regarding this process to ensure the successful reclamation of your lands. We encourage you to carefully review and understand the information provided in this package. Should you have questions, please contact the ER service desk at er.servicedesk@gov.sk.ca or 1-855-219-9373 and an ER official will respond.

Once the licensee has reclaimed and revegetated the site, their consultants will conduct what is known as a Detailed Site Assessment (DSA), which is the final step before the licensee applies for an AOR. In conducting the DSA, the consultant takes measurements of parameters like topsoil depth, compaction, vegetation height and density, and ensures that the results are comparable to measurements on the land immediately surrounding the site.

The licensee is required to provide the Reclamation Feedback Form (a copy of which is attached to this letter for your information) during the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Landowner Interview as of February 1, 2026, or as soon as possible in the process for Phase I's completed before this date. This will allow you to identify concerns, if any, that you may have with the condition of the reclaimed site, by completing the form and providing it back to the licensee as soon as possible after receiving the form and viewing the site. Should you have concerns that you believe have not been adequately addressed, please complete the Reclamation Feedback Form and return it to the licensee as soon as reasonably possible. Your feedback will be incorporated into the AOR application and will be given due consideration during ER's review process. If you do not return the form, ER will assume you are satisfied with the reclamation of the site. ER prefers the form be filled out and returned to the licensee, but it is not mandatory.

Attached to this letter you will find additional information detailing the process. Please be sure to take the time to read and understand this information.

What is Abandonment, Decommissioning, Remediation and Reclamation:

Once a licensee decides to complete closure work at a well or facility site, the following activities can generally be expected to occur within three to five years, however this timeframe is not guaranteed:

- **Well Abandonment and Decommissioning:** The abandonment/decommissioning of any wells (plugging the well downhole and cutting and capping the wellbore casing below ground). Downhole abandonment means “When all wellbores and completions are permanently plugged” in accordance with *Directive PNG015: Well Abandonment Requirements*. Cut and cap “refers to cutting off of the surface and production casing stubs a minimum of one metre (1m) below ground level, and the capping of a well” in accordance with Directive PNG015. The decommissioning and removal of all surface infrastructure.
- **Environmental Site Assessments:** After abandonment/decommissioning the first step in the process is the completion of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. This is a desktop study of the history of the site to conclude if there are potential contaminants at the site which warrant further investigation. If there is potential, a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment is performed which includes drilling boreholes into the site and testing the soil to find out if there are contaminants of concern remaining and if they are above regulatory criteria. If there are impacts remaining above criteria, a Phase III Environmental Site Assessment (Remediation) occurs which is the treatment or removal of said contaminants. These steps are usually completed within a year of the abandonment/decommissioning of the site. For all Phase I Environmental Site Assessments completed February 1, 2026 or later, the licensee is required to provide the Reclamation Feedback form (a copy of which is attached to this letter for your information) during the landowner interview portion of the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment. This will allow you to identify concerns, if any, that you may have with the condition of the site, by completing the form and providing it back to the licensee as soon as possible after receiving the form and viewing the site.
- **Site Remediation and Reclamation:** Once the infrastructure at a site has been decommissioned and/or removed, the site must be remediated and reclaimed in accordance with ER’s *Directive PNG016: Acknowledgment of Reclamation Requirements* and *Directive PNG018: Detailed Site Assessment Requirements*. These two documents can be found on the AOR Program webpage by searching www.saskatchewan.ca or by directly searching for the Directives in a search engine.
- **Reclamation Activities:** After the above steps are completed, the site is ready to be reclaimed. Reclamation activities include removing the pad site, recontouring the subsoil and replacing the topsoil. Directive PNG018 outlines requirements that must be met in regard to reclamation standards including topography, drainage, soil, and vegetation growth. Depending on the land use, the licensee, the licensee’s third-party consultant or the landowner will seed the site. Reclamation activities can take one to five years to complete after the well abandonment depending on the results of the Phase I, II, and III Environmental Site Assessments.

- **Detailed Site Assessment:** Once the site has been seeded and reclaimed, it must be compared to the standards set out in Directive PNG018 which compares soil and vegetation to what is found offsite (outside the lease boundary). Topsoil depth, texture, and compaction are assessed and vegetation height, density, weeds, and bare areas are compared to offsite. Note that the licensee or their representative should contact you prior to completing a DSA to ensure no concerns have come up since the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Interview and a new Reclamation Feedback Form should be offered to you. Note also, that if the site does not pass the DSA process, the licensee will wait until at least the next growing season to attempt the DSA again. Additional work may be required prior to the new DSA being completed.
- **AOR Application Submission:** Once a site passes the DSA, this information will form a part of the AOR application, along with the Reclamation Feedback Form (if completed), which is then submitted to ER for review. If approved, the lease agreement ends, and rental payments cease. Note that if you do not return the Reclamation Feedback Form, ER will assume you have no issues with the reclamation of the site.

Communication Requirements of Licensees and Landowners:

Although the above is a simplified version of events that will occur during the end portion of a well/facility lifecycle, the licensee and/or their third-party consultant should be having regular communication throughout the process to ensure landowners are satisfied with activities that are occurring on their land as well as answering any questions or concerns that arise at each step. In general, contact should occur prior to abandonment and reclamation activities to ensure the site is put back in consultation with the landowner's wishes regarding a land use change or site-specific concerns which should be addressed at this time. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure that all regulatory requirements are met, and it is the landowner's responsibility to be upfront with any concerns they have regarding the site.

While it is important that the licensee communicate with the landowner, it is also of utmost importance that landowners engage in the entire reclamation process and express their concerns as the work progresses. Failure to engage in the process and waiting until the licensee is ready to apply for an AOR to express concerns may result in unnecessary delays and costs. Any concerns should be submitted to the licensee as soon as they are observed to allow for timely resolution.

Since communication between the licensee and landowner should be ongoing throughout the AOR process, it is not acceptable for licensees to only contact a landowner when they are ready to submit the AOR application to the Government of Saskatchewan. Landowners will be contacted by the licensee prior to the completion of the final Detailed Site Assessment. This is the landowner's opportunity to inform the licensee of any remaining concerns they may have with the condition of the site. If concerns are presented by the landowner, it is the licensee's and landowners' mutual obligation to meet together on site to discuss and validate/invalidate these concerns as it relates to meeting Directive PNG018 requirements.

Final Landowner Confirmation of Reclamation and Optional Signoff:

If you have concerns that you don't believe have been addressed, please complete the Reclamation Feedback Form, sign it (not mandatory), and provide it back to the licensee as soon as reasonably possible. The feedback will form a part of the AOR application and will be considered when ER reviews the application.

Future Responsibility of Licensees After an AOR is approved:

Finally, landowners should be aware that even if a site receives an AOR approval, this does not absolve the licensee of their responsibility to carry out future work at the site or remedy issues that arise in the future that are a result of the previous oil and gas activities. Pursuant to section 6-3(1) of the Financial Security and Site Closure Regulations, the licensee is responsible for the environmental liability of a site in perpetuity.

Important Considerations:

- You may request that certain features such as gates, fences, cement pads, approaches, access roads or dugouts be left in place.
- All contamination related to oil and gas activities that is beyond lease boundaries of the site are the licensee's responsibility to remediate and reclaim if it exceeds regulatory criteria.
- All timelines quoted in this letter are unique to each site and may vary substantially. This should be discussed with the licensee or their representative.
- Upon completion of the DSA, the landowner may request the results of the DSA and/or the full AOR application and can provide feedback to the licensee within 30 days of the date that the documents were received. If this 30-day period has passed, you can still provide feedback to the licensee or ER, however the application's review may have been completed by then, so the sooner that information is provided the better.

If you have any questions regarding this document or the Government of Saskatchewan's Acknowledgement of Reclamation Program, the Ministry of Energy and Resources Service Desk can be contacted at 1-855-219-9373 or by sending an email to er.servicedesk@gov.sk.ca