

**Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 7, 2025**

SENATE BILL NO. 2335
(Senators Magrum, Dwyer, Paulson)

AN ACT to create and enact a new section to chapter 38-11.1 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to pretrial appraisals; and to amend and reenact section 38-11.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the recovery of attorney's fees in an action relating to oil and gas production.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. A new section to chapter 38-11.1 of the North Dakota Century Code is created and enacted as follows:

Pretrial appraisal required before commencement of action to recover compensation.

1. As used in this section, "certified appraiser" has the same meaning as in section 43-23.3-01.
2. Before commencing a legal action to recover compensation, a person entitled to compensation shall obtain a written appraisal valuing all parcels affected or foreseeably affected by drilling operations under this chapter. A certified appraiser, an individual possessing a temporary permit under section 43-23.3-11, or an individual possessing a permit under section 43-23.3-04.1 shall conduct the required appraisal.
3. Before a court may take jurisdiction over an action commenced under this chapter, a person seeking compensation under this chapter must have provided to a mineral developer a copy of an appraisal issued under subsection 2. The mineral developer may make a new offer for settlement to the surface owner within thirty days of receiving the appraisal. If a new offer is made under this subsection, the amount of the new offer serves as the offer contemplated under section 38-11.1-09.
4. The mineral developer shall reimburse the reasonable actual costs of the required appraisal incurred by the surface owner for obtaining a required appraisal under this section or, at the election of the surface owner, the mineral developer shall pay the reasonable actual costs directly to the appraiser.
5. The required appraisal or opinion of value expressed in the required appraisal is inadmissible at a proceeding commenced under this chapter, unless the information is offered by the surface owner. Whether an appraisal is issued under this section does not require or prohibit the introduction of specific evidence offered at a proceeding commenced under this chapter.

SECTION 2. AMENDMENT. Section 38-11.1-09 of the North Dakota Century Code is amended and reenacted as follows:

38-11.1-09. Rejection - Legal action - Fees and costs.

If the person seeking compensation rejects the offer of the mineral developer, that person may bring an action for compensation in the court of proper jurisdiction. If the amount of compensation awarded by the court is greater than ~~that which had been~~ the amount offered by the mineral developer, the court shall award the person seeking compensation reasonable attorney's fees, any costs assessed ~~by the court and disbursements under chapter 28-26,~~ and interest on the amount of the final compensation awarded by the court from the day drilling is commenced. The rate of interest awarded must be the prime rate charged by the Bank of North Dakota on the date of the judgment.

President of the Senate

Speaker of the House

Secretary of the Senate

Chief Clerk of the House

This certifies that the within bill originated in the Senate of the Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota and is known on the records of that body as Senate Bill No. 2335.

Senate Vote: Yeas 47 Nays 0 Absent 0

House Vote: Yeas 92 Nays 0 Absent 2

Secretary of the Senate

Received by the Governor at _____ M. on _____, 2025.

Approved at _____ M. on _____, 2025.

Governor

Filed in this office this _____ day of _____, 2025,

at _____ o'clock _____ M.

Secretary of State