



MEDIA STATEMENT

April 17, 2020

ALDP response to federal funding for oilfield cleanup

Funding will jumpstart well cleanup, but threatens integrity of Polluter Pays Principle

Regan Boychuk, co-founder and lead researcher of the Alberta Liabilities Disclosure Project, issues the following statement:

“The fact that a long-overdue cleanup of Alberta’s oil and gas wells can now begin in earnest is something to celebrate – but not that the public will be paying for the vast majority of it.

Our hope had been that any Federal funds to spur well cleanup would be in the form of a loan, with full, strict and short-term repayment conditions by industry. The \$200M to Alberta’s Orphan Well Association falls under these conditions and is a welcome development, as are the new oversight provisions for well cleanup.

But the vast majority of the support announced today is a transfer to the Government of Alberta without any mechanism to guarantee that industry will ultimately pay for its cleanup. The Polluter Pays Principle affirms that the oil and gas industry is legally responsible for the cleanup costs of the hundreds of thousands of wells they’ve drilled in Alberta. If these funds are *not* repaid by industry once the cleanup work is done, today’s announcement will become another public subsidy to oil and gas, and undermine the crucial principle that polluters are responsible for cleaning up their mess.

Today marks the beginning of the \$40-70 billion dollar cleanup of Alberta’s oil and gas wells. The precedent set during this crisis will determine whether Polluter Pays is upheld throughout the much bigger job to come. For the hundreds of thousands of people affected by aging oil and gas wells in this province – it’s time to get organized. ALDP is here to help.”

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For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Regan Boychuk, 403-479-8637, aldpcoalition@gmail.com