# Chevron ordered to pay $744 million for coastal wetland degradation



A civil jury in Louisiana has ruled that Chevron must pay over $744 million in damages for its role in the degradation of coastal wetlands in south-east Louisiana. This decision, delivered on Friday, concludes a long-standing case originating from a lawsuit filed by Plaquemines Parish in 2013, and represents the first trial in a series of 42 lawsuits concerning similar allegations against the oil and gas industry.

Jurors determined that Texaco, a subsidiary of Chevron, had violated state laws governing coastal resources by contributing to significant land loss through various operations including dredging canals, drilling wells, and inappropriately disposing of massive quantities of wastewater into the marshes. The wetlands are crucial to the area's ecosystems and act as a buffer against hurricanes, making their preservation critical.

The jury awarded Plaquemines Parish substantial compensations: $575 million for lost land, $161 million for environmental contamination, and $8.6 million for abandoned equipment. During the trial, attorney Jimmy Faircloth Jr, representing Louisiana's interests, highlighted the importance of the coast to local communities. He asserted, “Our communities are built on coast, our families raised on coast, our children go to school on coast,” underlining the need to maintain the coastal environment for future generations.

According to reports from the US Geological Survey, Louisiana is experiencing more wetland loss than any other state in the continental United States, with a staggering decline of approximately 25% of land area since 1932. The ongoing loss of wetlands continues to pose significant risks, with state authorities projecting an additional loss of up to 3,000 square miles in the next 50 years.

Chevron's attorney, Mike Phillips, announced the company's intention to appeal the verdict, arguing that the company was not responsible for the land loss and that many operations predated the applicable laws. He labelled the ruling as “unjust” and pointed out what he claimed were “numerous legal errors.” Phillips maintained that the issue of land loss is primarily linked to the extensive levee systems that impede the natural deposition of sediment by the Mississippi River, key to the restoration of the coastal area.

The lawsuit against Chevron is part of a broader trend in Louisiana where local governments are pursuing legal action against oil companies in hopes of securing funds for coastal restoration. The outcome of these proceedings could potentially encourage other companies to reach settlements in the ongoing lawsuits, as the financial implications for Chevron could set a precedent for future litigation.

The ramifications of the case extend beyond immediate financial penalties; they could also influence how oil and gas companies conduct operations in environmentally sensitive areas. The legal climate surrounding these kinds of lawsuits signifies a growing recognition of the impacts that the oil industry has had on Louisiana’s fragile ecosystems and the lives of its residents. As more communities fight for their rights and seek restoration, the ongoing environmental crisis in coastal Louisiana continues to capture national attention.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://fortune.com/2025/04/04/chevron-louisiana-coastal-wetlands-pollution-court-ruling-damages/> - This article corroborates the Chevron verdict, detailing the company's violation of regulations and the jury-awarded damages for land loss and contamination. It also discusses Chevron's intention to appeal.
* <https://www.businessreport.com/article/chevron-gets-hit-with-a-740m-verdict-over-louisianas-wetlands> - This source confirms Chevron's liability for damaging Louisiana's wetlands, echoing the damages awarded by the jury and highlighting the case's significance as the first of many similar lawsuits against the oil industry.
* <https://www.wwno.org/local-regional-news/2025-04-04/louisiana-jury-rules-chevron-must-pay-740-million-for-coastal-damages> - This report supports the notion that Chevron must pay for coastal damages, noting the lawsuit's origins and Chevron's plan to appeal while underscoring the legal and environmental implications.
* <https://fortune.com/2025/04/04/chevron-louisiana-coastal-wetlands-pollution-court-ruling-damages/> - Further details from this article highlight Chevron's operations, the violation of state laws, and the projected future impacts on coastal ecosystems, aligning with the article's claims about wetland loss.
* <https://www.businessreport.com/article/chevron-gets-hit-with-a-740m-verdict-over-louisianas-wetlands> - This source provides additional context on the broader legal landscape and Chevron's defense against the charges, which includes the argument that the applicable laws postdate some of the company's operations.
* <https://www.wwno.org/local-regional-news/2025-04-04/louisiana-jury-rules-chevron-must-pay-740-million-for-coastal-damages> - This report supports the ongoing environmental crisis in Louisiana, noting the importance of coastal restoration and the potential precedent set by this ruling for future litigation against oil companies.