NEW ORLEANS - Former Louisiana Gov. Mike Foster didn’t just support tort reform, he campaigned on the issue, promising to rein in plaintiffs’ attorneys who made big bucks suing big companies for big damages. And he delivered in a big way.

Shortly after his inauguration, he called a special session of the Legislature and passed a bill package to lessen liability exposure for businesses. He then ran campaign ads bragging that he had successfully stopped trial lawyers from filing frivolous, job-killing lawsuits.

That’s what makes the legacy lawsuit Maryland Co. v. Exxon so surprising. The 2010 suit is just one of about 360 lawsuits by landowners claiming contamination by oil and gas companies - and asking for multimillion dollar judgments to compensate for environmental damages.

The owner of The Maryland Co. vs. Mike Foster

“He’s the governor that took away punitive damages in April of 1996, soon after he got into office,” said Foster’s attorney, Glad Jones. “But on behalf of his family partnership, when he discovered the damage that had been done to his property as a result of 50 years of oil and gas activities, he was left in no other position really other than to bring a lawsuit asking the oil companies to clean up the property.”

Jones successfully represented the former governor in the lawsuit, winning a large settlement in 2012 that helped clean the property.

Even though Foster was the ultimate business-friendly governor, he got no
cooperation from oil companies. Even so, the first told him his land was damaged.

"You think that maybe there's an oil leak going on?" questioned Foster. "Look you worked for ExxonMobil in 1985. You're going to come in and get it fixed?" Foster said.

"You know, it's a long story. Over three years in a hard-won struggle, we had to bring them to court. Nobody went out there to fix it. Nobody did the right thing," Foster stated.

Foster said he had two kids in diapers and the money was needed to buy formula. "I'm a truck driver. I don't make much money. But when you're dealing with an unlined oil waste pit into 100 acres of freshwater marsh. The liquid oil is filtering through the marsh, but Jones said nobody had cleaned it up.

It took more than two years for ExxonMobil to fix the damage or a remote disposal site on the property. When he sued, the photo- graphs that showed the leaking from an unlined oil waste pit into 100 acres, had been submitted to state regulators. Of those, only 12 sites have been cleaned to state standards. With millions of dollars paid out of a $4 million settlement, new documents show it was never used. "We can now use the money to replace lost property. That's the reality is very different from what's happening now in these landowners," he said.

"We're nof going to be part of this,

"We're nof going to be part of this, either in Cameron or Vermilion. We're not going to let the oil companies to clean up decades of pollution. The property our firm handles about 8 million dollars paid to the state. I have no say so on what the state said here. There's a lot of iron-clad rules that accompanies them, you clean up message.

"Louisiana's last, and maybe the uncontested leader in the majority of cases. Yet, some plaintiffs have no evidence for the state and the parish. It's to benefit them. The state has to stop," Carmouche said.

"Louisiana's last, and maybe the uncontested leader in the majority of cases. Yet, some plaintiffs have no evidence for the state and the parish. It's to benefit them. The state has to stop," Carmouche said.

"Louisiana's last, and maybe the uncontested leader in the majority of cases. Yet, some plaintiffs have no evidence for the state and the parish. It's to benefit them. The state has to stop," Carmouche said.

"Louisiana's last, and maybe the uncontested leader in the majority of cases. Yet, some plaintiffs have no evidence for the state and the parish. It's to benefit them. The state has to stop," Carmouche said.