

# Environmental Protection

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## Business Plan 1998-99 to 2000-01

### Accountability Statement

*This Business Plan for the three years commencing April 1, 1998 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the Government Accountability Act and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at January 20, 1998 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in preparing the Business Plan.*

*The Ministry's priorities outlined in the Business Plan were developed in the context of the government's business and fiscal plans. I am committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this Business Plan.*



Ty Lund  
Minister of Environmental Protection  
January 26, 1998

### Introduction

The Ministry of Environmental Protection includes the Department of Environmental Protection, the Environmental Appeal Board, and the Natural Resources Conservation Board. Together, the Ministry contributes to a healthy environment, healthy Albertans and the Alberta Advantage. We directly support the Government's core businesses — People, Prosperity and Preservation, and contribute to Government priorities.

# Vision

*Alberta's environment, in all its majesty and beauty, ensures our high quality of life now and in the future.*

# Our Mission

*As proud stewards of Alberta's renewable natural resources, we will protect, enhance and ensure the wise use of our environment. We are a dedicated and committed team, responsible for managing these resources with Albertans. We are guided by a shared commitment to the environment and are accountable to our partners, the people of Alberta.*

The Ministry of Environmental Protection is committed to managing the environment in a way that protects and maintains the landscape and its diversity for the benefit of present and future generations. Future economic prosperity is supported by managing natural resources in a sustainable manner.

# Business Drivers

A number of factors shape the Ministry's business plan:

- ◆ **The Growth Summit:** The Ministry will address many of the needs and issues identified during the September 1997 Growth Summit: a new model for sustainable development and growth will be addressed through integrated resource management; regulatory reform will be accomplished through the regulatory action plan; clarification of roles and responsibilities of various orders of government will be assured through federal/provincial/territorial harmonization discussions; increased environmental information for the public will be addressed through the internet, public reports, information centres and call-in numbers; and staff development will be strengthened through the Ministry's Human Resources Plan in consultation with the Personnel Administration Office.
- ◆ **Balanced Budget:** The Ministry will continue to support the Government's commitment to balancing the budget and reducing debt.
- ◆ **Natural Events:** The Ministry recognizes that natural events such as floods and forest fires will occur from time to time. To protect lives, property and resources, the Ministry will respond to these events when they occur.
- ◆ **Accidental Releases:** The Ministry is committed to protecting the environment from pollution. We believe that the best way to protect the health of people and the integrity of the environment is to prevent the creation and release of contaminants to the environment. When releases do happen, we will ensure that polluters are responsible for paying for the environmental consequences of their actions.
- ◆ **Community Level Service:** The Ministry is committed to providing Albertans with one-window access to information, and knowledgeable and helpful staff within the regions in which they live and work. We believe that resource and environmental decisions should be made closer to those most affected.
- ◆ **Scientific Information:** The Ministry relies on science and its application. We will focus on acquiring and helping to develop the research and science needed to accomplish our mission.

# Operating Principles

In conducting our business, we are guided by our belief in:

- ◆ **Resource Sustainability:** We promote the wise use of our renewable resources within ecosystems so that future generations may continue to benefit from them.
- ◆ **Informed Decision-Making:** We use leading-edge information in making decisions that affect the management and protection of the environment.
- ◆ **Shared Responsibility:** We share the responsibility for managing and protecting the environment with all Albertans and with other levels of government.
- ◆ **Public Involvement:** We provide Albertans with the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect the environment.
- ◆ **Customer Service:** We are dedicated to service excellence in all regions of Alberta.

## Core Business

Our two core businesses focus on our mission and are reflected in our strategies and activities.

### **Core Business 1: Resource Management**

- ◆ The Ministry of Environmental Protection strives to ensure the sustainable use of Alberta's renewable natural resources through the development and implementation of legislation, policies, plans and programs, standard setting, compliance monitoring, ambient monitoring, renewable resource inventories, environmental impact assessments, and the issuance of approvals.
- ◆ The Ministry of Environmental Protection strives to ensure the environmentally responsible development of non-renewable natural resources in close collaboration with other ministries having a related mandate.

### **Core Business 2: Environmental Hazard Management**

- ◆ The Ministry of Environmental Protection reduces the risks of environmental hazards to people, property and the sustainability of our renewable natural resources through fire fighting, flood control and problem wildlife control.

## Goals, Strategies and Key Activities

- ◆ Three Ministry goals reflect how our core businesses will be delivered. These goals contribute to the achievement of the government's core businesses: People, Prosperity, Preservation.
- ◆ Performance measures related to the goals are also shown following each goal.
- ◆ A number of strategies contribute to the achievement of the Ministry's goals. Some of these strategies support more than one goal, but are included below only once.

- ◆ Some activities that contribute to the achievement of goals and strategies, and that reflect the Ministry's response to issues raised during the September 1997 Growth Summit are detailed below.
- ◆ Within the Ministry, program components contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Ministry's strategies. The linkage between the Ministry's goals and strategies, and the Ministry's program components is illustrated in the table following the strategies and key activities.

**Goal 1** To protect and maintain Alberta's high quality air, land and water for the health and enjoyment of Albertans.

***Ministry Performance Measures***

- ◆ Air quality index
- ◆ Surface water quality index
- ◆ Reduction of municipal solid waste to landfills

***Strategy 1.1 Establish acceptable standards for air, land and water quality.***

- develop guidelines to protect Alberta's air, land and ground water quality
- contribute to the ongoing development of national guidelines and standards (in particular, ground-level ozone, benzene, mercury, dioxins and furans, particulates, total petroleum hydrocarbons).

***Strategy 1.2 Monitor, assess and take action to maintain the quality of Alberta's air, land and water.***

- monitor air, soil, water and ground water quality
- issue clear and enforceable resource use approvals for over 120 existing industrial activities approved under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, and 13 new industrial activities representing over \$3 billion of investment in Alberta
- implement a comprehensive compliance assurance and enforcement program
- designate and decommission contaminated sites
- establish the McKenzie River Basin Board to implement recommendations of the Northern River Basins Study as approved by government.

***Strategy 1.3 Actively promote understanding and improve knowledge of Alberta's environment.***

- publish state of the environment reports on air quality, terrestrial ecosystems, and a comprehensive report on the state of the environment
- provide industry and the public with information on the environment, resources, environmental protection, recreation and protected areas and Ministry programs through publications, the internet and information centres
- develop and deliver "bias-balanced" educational information (that is, present all sides of an environmental issue) on topics such as climate change, forest management and biodiversity as outlined in the environmental education strategy
- undertake air emission studies and sustainable forest management studies.

**Strategy 1.4 Provide Albertans with opportunities to contribute to environmental protection and natural resource management.**

- obtain the input of Albertans through stakeholders represented on the Advisory Committee on Environmental Protection, the Special Places Coordinating Committee, the Alberta Forest Management Science Council; through the Natural Resources Conservation Board, the Environmental Appeal Board; and through other consultation mechanisms
- maintain telephone “hotlines” so that the public can report wildfires, poaching, hazardous spills and environmental contamination.

**Goal 2** To manage Alberta’s renewable resources for the continued prosperity and benefit of Albertans.

**Ministry Performance Measures**

- ◆ Timber sustainability
- ◆ Pulp production versus amount of biochemical oxygen demand discharged

**Strategy 2.1 Provide clear, effective direction and guidance for the use, management and development of Alberta’s renewable natural resources.**

- develop a comprehensive statement recognizing the interdependence of natural resources, respecting that the use of one resource can affect other resources and their use, and considering the new model for growth identified through the Growth Summit
- develop and maintain guidelines for the use, conservation and management of public land and natural resources (such as guidelines for incorporating biodiversity objectives to forest management plans)
- establish a framework for water management planning in Alberta
- establish a strategy for the protection of the aquatic environment as part of the framework for water management planning
- implement elements of the Fish Conservation Strategy
- provide resource-based recreational opportunities
- support and promote sustainable resource-based activities.

**Strategy 2.2 Streamline regulatory processes and legislative requirements.**

- implement the regulatory reform action plan<sup>1</sup>, reviewing legislation such as the *Forests Act*, *Land Agents Licensing Act*, and *Surveys Act*
- complete a review of integrated resource management policies, remove overlap and duplication among these policies, and fill policy gaps to ensure consistent, clear and integrated resource management policy direction
- work to harmonize the environment management roles and responsibilities among various orders of government.

**Strategy 2.3 Reduce impact of natural hazards (fire, drought, flood, pests) on people, property and resources.**

- maintain forest fire detection and suppression infrastructure in addition to fighting wildfires as required
- monitor and control major forest pests and disease
- provide flood protection by monitoring water flows, making the public aware of flood risk areas, and providing flood warnings
- maintain the safety of dams, dikes and other water impoundment structures.

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<sup>1</sup> The Ministry’s Regulatory Reform Action Plan and the 1997 regulatory review schedule is available to the public.

**Goal 3** To protect and manage Alberta's natural resources and ecosystems for present and future generations.

**Ministry Performance Measures**

- ◆ Species at risk
- ◆ Area of parks and natural reserves in Alberta
- ◆ Parks visitation

**Strategy 3.1 Establish acceptable levels of protection for natural resources and ecosystems.**

- complete the review of nominated and candidate sites for the Special Places program; initiate management plans for sites designated as special places
- develop and introduce the *Natural Heritage Act* which consolidates three existing Acts into one.

**Strategy 3.2 Monitor, assess and take action to protect natural resources and ecosystems.**

- maintain and enhance electronic infrastructure and databases for natural resource and land related data, including basic mapping information, the Alberta Vegetation Inventory and ecological data
- manage the Environmental Impact Assessment process for eight major new projects in 1998 worth approximately \$10.5 billion, and more projects expected in future years
- continue to manage and resolve appeals of decisions which have increased over 230 percent between 1995 and 1996
- ensure reclamation of disturbed land.

Ministry Program Components Link to Strategies:	Ministry Strategies									
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.2	
Business Support for Ministry Programs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Environmental Service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Fish and Wildlife Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Recreation and Protected Areas Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Water Resources Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Land and Forest Management	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Forest Protection and Fire Suppression		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Environmental Appeal Board		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Natural Resources Conservation Board	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Environmental Protection and Enhancement Fund		✓					✓			

## Performance Measures

Eight key performance measures are used in this business plan to indicate our success in accomplishing our goals. One new performance measure, Parks Visitation, has been added since the 1997/98 to 1999/2000 business plan. A description of each of the eight performance measures follows. In addition to these eight measures, the Ministry also contributes to seven government measures reported in *Measuring Up*. These measures include: Resource Wealth, Resource Sustainability, Air Quality, Water Quality, Land Quality, Heritage Appreciation and Infrastructure. Improvements to Ministry performance measures will be reflected in future business plans.

### Air Quality Index

The air quality index provides an indication of the quality of air in Alberta throughout the year at selected locations in the province, including Edmonton, Calgary, Fort Saskatchewan, Fort McKay, Vegreville, and Fort McMurray. The measure illustrates the percentage of days in the year during which air is rated good, fair, poor or very poor using the guidelines established by Alberta's *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*. The target is to maintain air quality levels which are considered good or fair at all times.

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<b>Good</b>	96%	97%	98%	97%	96%	99%	98%	96%	98%	98%
<b>Fair</b>	4%	3%	2%	3%	4%	1%	2%	4%	2%	2%
<b>Poor</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Very Poor</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0




### Reduction of Municipal Solid Waste to Landfills

This measure provides an indication of Alberta's progress towards meeting a municipal solid waste reduction target of 50% of 1988 levels by the year 2000.

1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
100%	97.2%	95.9%	96.9%	87.5%	85.8%	77.2%	71.2%

## Surface Water Quality Index

The Surface Water Quality Index provides an indication of river water quality for recreation, aquatic life, and agriculture uses upstream and downstream of major Alberta centres. The target is to bring river water quality downstream of developed areas in line with upstream conditions.

Location	 Recreation	 Aquatic Life	 Agriculture	Issues - Concerns
<b>SMOKY/PEACE RIVER</b>				
at Watino	○	⊗	○	pulp mill & municipal effluents
at Ft. Vermilion	○	⊗	⊗	
<b>ATHABASCA RIVER</b>				
at Athabasca	⊗	○	○	pulp mill & municipal effluents
at Old Fort	⊗	○	○	
<b>NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER</b>				
upstream of Edmonton	○	○	○	municipal, industrial and non-point pollution sources
downstream of Edmonton	●	⊗	○	
<b>RED DEER RIVER</b>				
upstream of Red Deer	○	○	○	municipal, industrial and non-point pollution sources
downstream of Red Deer	○	⊗	○	
<b>BOW RIVER</b>				
upstream of Calgary	○	○	○	municipal & non-point pollution sources; reduced flow due to water withdrawal
downstream of Calgary	●	⊗	⊗	
<b>OLDMAN RIVER</b>				
upstream of Lethbridge	○	⊗	○	municipal & non-point pollution sources
downstream of Lethbridge	●	⊗	○	
Based on percentage of compliant tests in 1995				
○	water quality is good:	very few tests not meeting guidelines	(100 - 96% compliance)	
⊗	water quality is fair:	guidelines not met occasionally.	(95 - 86% compliance)	
○	water quality is poor:	guidelines often not met.	(85 - 71% compliance)	
●	water quality is not acceptable	guidelines frequently not met.	(70% compliance and lower)	

## Timber Sustainability

The Timber Sustainability measure compares the actual annual timber harvest with the approved annual allowable cut (AAC) as set by the province. The AAC is the amount of timber that can be harvested on a sustainable basis within a defined planning area. The target is for Alberta's annual timber harvest to be no greater than the AAC, ensuring a timber supply for the future.

Million m <sup>3</sup>	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<b>AAC</b>	25.6	25.6	25.6	25.6	25.6	24.5	24.5	24.5	22.1	22.1
<b>Harvest</b>	8.2	8.3	9.6	8.8	11.6	11.9	13.7	13.1	15.1	16.9



## Pulp Production Versus Amount of Biochemical Oxygen Demand Discharged

Oxygen is required in the breakdown of pulp mill waste water. Disposal of waste water into surface waters may decrease the amount of oxygen available to aquatic organisms. Keeping the levels of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) down, means that more oxygen is available for aquatic ecosystems.

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
<b>BOD kg/tonne</b>	3.17	2.22	1.67	1.22	0.99	0.84	0.90
<b>Number of mills</b>	5	6	6	7	7	7	7

## Species at Risk

The Species at Risk measure shows the health of Alberta's fish and wildlife populations as assessed by the proportions of species that are at serious risk, vulnerable/sensitive, healthy or of undetermined status. The 538 species reviewed include 370 birds, 90 mammals, 60 fish, 10 amphibians, and 8 reptiles. The target is to keep the percentage of species at serious risk below 5%.

	Healthy	Vulnerable/Sensitive	Undetermined	Serious Risk
1996	85%	9%	4%	2%
1991	55%	20%	20%	5%

## Area of Parks and Natural Reserves in Alberta

This measure describes the total area parks, natural reserves and related sites (including national parks) in Alberta. The target is to have 81,000 square kilometres of Alberta designated as parks, natural reserves or related sites by the year 2000.

1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1995	1996
50 000 km <sup>2</sup>	55 000 km <sup>2</sup>	56 000 km <sup>2</sup>	57 000 km <sup>2</sup>	60 000 km <sup>2</sup>	62 207 km <sup>2</sup>	63 972 km <sup>2</sup>

## Parks Visitation

The Parks Visitation measure reflects parks use by Albertans and visitors to the province, and opportunities for enjoyment provided by the recreation and protected areas system. The measure is defined as the total number of daily entries of persons onto recreation and protected area sites. The target is to maintain parks visitation rates at 8 million.

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Millions of visitors	8.6	8.7	8.4	9.0	8.9	8.5

# Environmental Protection Ministry Consolidated Income Statement

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1996-97 Actual	Comparable 1997-98 Budget	Comparable 1997-98 Forecast	1998-99 Estimates	1999-2000 Target	2000-01 Target
<b>REVENUE</b>						
Internal Government Transfers	1,246	1,379	1,161	1,230	1,246	1,262
Transfers from Government of Canada	1,582	1,217	888	790	790	790
Investment Income	4,957	4,018	5,869	5,847	6,605	7,894
Premiums, Fees and Licences	175,876	93,485	139,476	101,244	102,094	117,094
Other Revenue	15,328	8,155	9,906	6,751	6,751	6,752
<i>Consolidation Adjustments</i>	1,254	(1,379)	(1,161)	(1,230)	(1,246)	(1,262)
<b>Consolidated Revenue</b>	<b>200,243</b>	<b>106,875</b>	<b>156,139</b>	<b>114,632</b>	<b>116,240</b>	<b>132,530</b>
<b>EXPENSE</b>						
<b>Program</b>						
Business Sustaining Services	9,778	8,800	8,800	7,739	7,880	8,002
Environmental Service	48,786	49,950	49,995	49,726	48,440	49,039
Fish and Wildlife Management	28,216	28,317	28,789	27,980	28,506	28,887
Recreation and Protected Areas Management	32,313	30,864	30,746	26,097	26,437	26,784
Water Resource Management	35,770	31,969	31,634	28,575	28,958	29,350
Land/Forest Management	41,315	36,542	39,701	37,121	37,850	38,440
Forest Protection/Fire Suppression	59,557	62,459	62,471	61,856	62,461	63,001
Assistance to Funds and Agencies	17,920	1,850	1,744	1,739	1,760	1,781
Environmental Protection and Enhancement Fund	17,403	32,586	48,635	26,119	26,116	26,116
Natural Resources Conservation Board	777	1,397	1,135	1,249	1,265	1,281
Ministry Amortization	24,522	24,774	24,819	24,832	26,044	26,044
Valuation Adjustment	(3,191)	(237)	(1,581)	(84)	(10)	1,189
<i>Consolidation Adjustments</i>	29,189	(1,379)	(1,161)	(1,230)	(1,246)	(1,262)
<b>Consolidated Expense</b>	<b>342,355</b>	<b>307,892</b>	<b>325,727</b>	<b>291,719</b>	<b>294,461</b>	<b>298,652</b>
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	571	(968)	(968)	(248)	-	-
Write Down of Inventory held for Resale	(14)	-	(1,961)	-	-	-
<b>NET OPERATING RESULT</b>	<b>(141,555)</b>	<b>(201,985)</b>	<b>(172,517)</b>	<b>(177,335)</b>	<b>(178,221)</b>	<b>(166,122)</b>