

# BUSINESS PLAN 2017–20

## Environment and Parks

### ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into consideration the government's policy decisions as of March 3, 2017.

*original signed by*  
Shannon Phillips, Minister

### MINISTRY OVERVIEW

The ministry consists of the Department of Environment and Parks, the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund, Energy Efficiency Alberta, the Land Stewardship Fund, and the Natural Resources Conservation Board. Within the department's budget, funding is provided for the Land Use Secretariat, the Surface Rights Board, the Land Compensation Board, the Environmental Appeals Board, and the Public Lands Appeal Board. The Climate Change Office functions within the ministry to implement Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan in collaboration with other ministries.

Six delegated administrative organizations which operate outside of government and are accountable to the minister are the Alberta Conservation Association, Alberta Professional Outfitters Society, Alberta Recycling Management Authority, Alberta Used Oil Management Association, Beverage Container Management Board, and Emissions Reduction Alberta.

Albertans are proud of the province's environment, natural resources, and system of parks and protected areas. Alberta's vision is for a healthy and clean province where Albertans are leaders in environmental conservation and protection, enjoy sustainable economic prosperity and a great quality of life. Environment and Parks works to protect and enhance the Alberta environment and ecosystems throughout the province to ensure a sustainable future, making life better for Albertans. The ministry works with Albertans to ensure the province's environmental, social and economic outcomes for the future are met. Strategic partnerships support the ministry in achieving its outcomes by providing collaborative forums to leverage resources, capacity and a shared responsibility for environmental stewardship. The ministry participates in the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples objectives and principles and engages Albertans to listen and understand the challenges in ensuring that Alberta's natural resources are managed using innovative and responsible approaches. To ensure the sustainability of Alberta's air, land, water and biodiversity, all Albertans will need to play a strong role.

A more detailed description of Environment and Parks and its programs and initiatives can be found at [www.aep.alberta.ca](http://www.aep.alberta.ca) and [www.alberta.ca/climate.aspx](http://www.alberta.ca/climate.aspx).

### STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The outcomes and key strategies identified in this business plan are aligned with and support the strategic direction of the Government of Alberta.

The Government of Alberta must continue to develop its integrated and forward-looking approach to responsible resource management. Aligned strategic direction, and policy development and implementation across all levels of government, agencies, boards and commissions are needed to ensure a healthy environment, a resilient economy, and a fair and inclusive society. Government's decision-making processes must consider the cumulative social,

economic, and environmental impacts in order to achieve these ends. As low oil and gas prices have created significant economic challenges for the province, there is a stronger expectation that government will adapt, and be proactive and innovative. Albertans are looking for government to diversify the economy and create jobs by investing in a greener, more diverse economy.

The Climate Leadership Plan protects Alberta by ensuring that solutions are not imposed on the province. It positions Alberta as a world leader in sustainable energy production and it will help Alberta access new markets for its oil and gas products.

Alberta's landscape is facing increasing and competing demands including those associated with outdoor recreation and services with Alberta's parks. Effectively managing the impacts of outdoor recreation may also create an opportunity for expansion of recreation and tourism industries as part of an evolution to a greener and more diversified economy.

Finally, as the frequency and severity of catastrophic events such as wildfires, flooding and drought increase, Albertans are looking to the government to ensure the province is well prepared for natural disasters to minimize their economic, social and environmental impacts and costs.

## **OUTCOMES, KEY STRATEGIES AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

### **Outcome One: Environment and ecosystem health and integrity**

Albertans care about the health and integrity of their environment and ecosystems and the ministry is committed to a renewed approach to conservation, biodiversity and ecological integrity. Productive relationships and strategic partnerships that include Albertans are needed to achieve clean air, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, quality water, sustainable water supplies, productive and sustainable lands, conserved natural landscapes, protected areas and ecosystem services. The ministry works with strategic partners to conserve landscapes representative of Alberta's natural regions and ecosystems that protect biodiversity and provide habitat for common, vulnerable, and endangered species.

Leadership and direction to achieve the desired outcomes is provided through legislation, policy, regional plans and frameworks, and is supported by engagement, education, outreach, authorizations, and compliance programs as well as environmental trends and conditions monitoring, evaluating, and reporting. Examples of ongoing ministry initiatives include: incenting economy wide greenhouse gas emission reductions; undertaking biodiversity and landscape management actions such as identifying and recovering species at risk; and enabling the Land Trust Grant Program and the Land Purchase Program to help address habitat fragmentation, maintain biodiversity and preserve intact landscapes. The ministry provides an environmental stewardship framework based on planning and policy and then regulates natural resource access, allocation and use. To protect and conserve Alberta's air, water, land and biodiversity, it is essential for businesses, non-governmental organizations, all levels of government, communities, and individuals to comply with limits, standards and requirements for pollutant emissions, water withdrawals, wastewater discharges, fish and wildlife harvest, species conservation, timely land reclamation, and remediation. Ecosystem health and integrity will enable Alberta to meet environmental, economic, and social needs for present and future generations.

#### **Key Strategies:**

- 1.1 Continued implementation of Alberta's Climate Leadership Plan through collaboration between the Climate Change Office and ministries to:
  - protect the health of Albertans by phasing out emissions from coal-fired sources of electricity and develop cleaner sources of energy generation;
  - implement a carbon levy on fuels that emit greenhouse gas when combusted and reinvest revenue into rebates, energy efficiency programs, and into economic diversification;
  - implement a legislated oil sands emission limit; and
  - employ a new methane emission reduction plan.

- 1.2 Ensure environmental protection, conservation and ecosystem integrity through:
- regional and sub-regional land-use plans including development of environmental management frameworks for the North Saskatchewan Regional Plan and implementation of actions in response to the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan Panel Review Report;
  - air quality management action plans to address the *Alberta: Air Zones Report 2011-13*, which is based on Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards;
  - contribution to Canada's international commitment that at least 17 per cent of terrestrial areas and inland waters are conserved through networks of protected areas and other effective area-based measures;
  - development and implementation of an expanded provincial monitoring and reporting network that supports access to scientific data and information on Alberta's ambient environmental conditions and trends and is informed by traditional ecological knowledge and the independent Science and Indigenous Wisdom Advisory Panel recommendations;
  - development of an ecosystem services policy framework;
  - on-going collaboration among ministries and agencies associated with implementation of the Integrated Resource Management System;
  - supporting the Ministry of Energy with the orphan well liability and hydraulic fracturing review;
  - ensuring grazing lease objectives are communicated and monitored;
  - updating provincial waste management through revisions of waste control regulations and implementation of contaminated sites guidance document; and
  - implementing an external stakeholder engagement strategy.
- 1.3 Enhance Alberta's parks and protected areas system, in conjunction with the continued implementation of *Alberta's Land-use Framework*, through:
- development and implementation of the Parks and Protected Areas Strategy and consultation on an updated draft parks management plan for the Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park;
  - development of modern park facilities; and
  - revitalizing and modernizing provincial parks legislation, including a revised provincial parks classification system.
- 1.4 Continue strengthening our relationship and engagement with Indigenous communities as we respect the objectives and principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- 1.5 Strengthen and enhance water management and literacy through:
- water ministerial regulation updates;
  - advancement of water reuse and storm water policies;
  - continued implementation of the wetland policy and tailings management framework; and
  - enhanced water conservation in oil sands tailing and hydraulic fracturing.
- 1.6 Address species and wildlife management through:
- development of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Strategy;
  - development of caribou range and action plans for all caribou populations to meet species recovery requirements;
  - implementation of a collaborative watercourse crossing remediation program to recover watershed health and fish species in flowing waters;
  - development and implementation of a feral horse management plan; and
  - development and implementation of species at risk recovery plans including westslope cutthroat trout and grizzly bear.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (Year)	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
1.a Priced greenhouse gas emissions				
• Percentage of priced provincial CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions <sup>1</sup>	45% (2014)	60%	70%	70%

**Note:**

<sup>1</sup> Priced greenhouse gas emissions tracks the progress toward pricing a broader range of provincial GHG emissions, extending from carbon pricing based on sector and product performance standards to combustion fuel pricing, with pricing coverage increasing from 45% in 2014 to 70% in 2018-19, with a longer term target of 90%. The results reported are based on a 2-year reporting lag time. The last actual data reported is the most current data available from 2014. Targets for this three-year business plan are based on the most recent available data and further account for key government priorities (Climate Leadership Plan) that are reporting the same data in a different context and reporting period.

**Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:**

1.a Priced greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions performance measure tracks the progress toward pricing a broader range of provincial GHG emissions, extending from carbon pricing based only on emissions intensity limits for large final emitters to an economy-wide price on combustion fuels. Emissions pricing systems are broadly understood to be an effective and efficient means of reducing emissions. Pricing coverage is important as it increases the breadth of reductions that will be pursued and will ultimately contribute toward achieving reduced GHG emissions in Alberta. Environmental and ecosystem health and integrity is impacted by GHG emissions as they are a major contributor to climate change.

Performance Indicators	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)
1.a Provincial air quality index: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of good air quality days in urban areas based on Alberta's ambient air quality objectives for fine particulate matter, ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide<sup>1</sup></li> </ul>	95% (2011)	97% (2012)	96% (2013)	97% (2014)	95% (2015)
Good air quality days					
1.b Species at risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of vertebrate species including mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and fish designated as 'at risk'<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>			2.2% (2005)	3.6% (2010)	4.2% (2015)
1.c Total greenhouse gas emissions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Total million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (greenhouse gas) emitted from source categories<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	242 (2010)	246 (2011)	260 (2012)	272 (2013)	274 (2014)
1.d Municipal solid waste to landfills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kilograms of municipal solid waste, per capita, disposed of in landfills<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>	717 (2011)	691 (2012)	911 (2013)	669 (2014)	661 (2015)
1.e Transboundary waters outflow obligations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of inter-provincial and international transboundary rivers for which Alberta delivers its river water quantity outflow obligations, out of the total number of outflow obligations<sup>5</sup></li> </ul>	7 out of 7 (2011)	7 out of 7 (2012)	7 out of 7 (2013)	7 out of 7 (2014)	6 out of 7 (2015)
Transboundary outflow obligations met					

**Notes:**

- <sup>1</sup> The Air Quality Index reflects the overall provincial air quality based on ambient air quality objectives of five major pollutants: fine particulate matter, ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide. The Canadian Ambient Air Quality Standards focus on long-term ambient levels of fine particulate matter and ozone in the province's six air zones and complement the Air Quality Index by guiding air quality management actions.
- <sup>2</sup> Species at risk results are gathered by the provincial government, universities, colleges and expert biologists, and are reported federally once every five years as legislated by the *Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk in Canada*.
- <sup>3</sup> Greenhouse gas emissions have a two year reporting lag period.
- <sup>4</sup> Municipal solid waste to landfills has shifted to a performance indicator as the results are highly influenced by external factors and the ministry has limited contribution toward achieving performance metric results which align. The 2013 actual is not reflective of historical trends due to the Southern Alberta floods.
- <sup>5</sup> Interim data from administrative bodies have been used to populate 2014 and 2015 results.

## **Outcome Two: Sustainable economic diversification**

Albertans wish to generate economic diversification through a green economy that improves human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities. A green economy is one where growth in income and employment is driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Investing in a greener, more efficient economy through utilization of green spaces and diversification of land use will expand rural economies and their sustainability. The Government of Alberta will utilize policy, regulations and economic instruments to catalyze and enable the growth and efficiency of a green economy through investment and development by Albertans in green sectors such as waste, water, renewable energy, ecotourism and outdoor recreation. The development of a green economy promotes the government's bottom line of sustaining and advancing economic, environmental and social well-being now and into the future.

### **Key Strategies:**

- 2.1 Through the Climate Change Office and in collaboration with other ministries and Energy Efficiency Alberta, implement energy efficiency initiatives.
- 2.2 Support Alberta's progress towards a green economy to create new jobs in agriculture, forestry, transportation and construction sectors by providing leadership on adoption of greener technology.
- 2.3 Ensure the parks, public lands and conservation efforts create jobs in tourism and associated industries.
- 2.4 Strengthen landowners' rights for compensation and due process in surface rights issues.
- 2.5 Implement opportunities for park facility and/or program sponsorship to ensure long term sustainability.

### **Performance Measure(s) under Development:**

Performance measure(s) are under development that reflect progress toward achieving sustainable economic diversification through nature-based tourism and outdoor recreation on public lands and provincial parks.

## **Outcome Three: Social well-being**

Albertans love the province and wish to maximize the social benefits a quality natural environment provides. To complement the overall mental and physical health benefits derived from a healthy environment and ecosystem, the ministry manages Alberta's provincial parks system land base, facilities and infrastructure, and access to public lands. Opportunities are provided for Albertans and visitors to explore natural landscapes, engage in nature-based experiences or outdoor recreational activities, and learn about Alberta's natural heritage through the ministry's many educational, interpretative and experiential programs. Additional outdoor recreational activities are provided through management of water reservoirs and fish hatcheries. These interactions enhance social well-being and quality of life while contributing to the provincial green economy through Alberta's recreation and tourism industry. To ensure that these opportunities continue to be available to future generations, the ministry will work with Albertans including the Indigenous populations, to protect and conserve the province's air, land, water and biodiversity.

### **Key Strategies:**

- 3.1 Enhance Alberta's provincial parks system, in conjunction with the continued implementation of *Alberta's Land-use Framework*, by:
  - addressing the commitment to provide modern facilities, high quality recreation experiences, and conservation; and
  - continuing to develop and implement strategies, including the Inclusion Strategy, Science Strategy and the Visitor Experience Strategy, to enable Albertans of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to experience nature through Alberta's provincial parks system.

- 3.2 Implement a recreation management strategy for Crown Lands (parks, conservation areas and other public lands) that fosters outdoor recreation planning, management, development and nature-based tourism, within a green and diverse economy.
- 3.3 Modernize the Alberta Fish and Wildlife Policy including the Metis Harvesting Policy, to address increased and changing pressures.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (Year)	Target 2017-18	Target 2018-19	Target 2019-20
3.a Hunting wildlife certificate and Canadian sportfishing licence sales per capita <sup>1</sup> :				
• Per cent of hunting wildlife certificate sales per capita	3.1%	3.3%	3.4%	3.5%
• Per cent of Canadian sportfishing licence sales per capita	7.3% (2015)	7.4%	7.5%	7.6%
3.b Provincial park or provincial recreation areas visitation				
• Percentage of Albertans who visited a provincial park or provincial recreation area in the last 12 months	33.6% (2015-16)	33.0%	33.0%	33.0%
3.c Park visitor satisfaction				
• Percentage of Albertans who visited provincial parks or provincial recreation areas in the last 12 months and are satisfied with the quality of services and facilities	91.4% (2015-16)	95%	95%	95%

**Note:**

<sup>1</sup> The hunting wildlife certificates and Canadian sportfishing licence sales per capita performance measure replaces the percentage change hunting wildlife certificates and percentage change sportfishing license sales measure previously reported.

**Linking Performance Measures to Outcomes:**

- 3.a Nature-based activities provide social and economic benefits to Albertans and foster communities that are engaged in environmental stewardship and responsible use of nature. The ministry issues hunting and fishing licences which provide opportunities for Albertans to engage in hunting and fishing and to connect with nature while developing an appreciation and respect for the outdoors and wildlife. Licensing also provides revenue for wilderness development and outdoor recreation management and has direct tourism and economic benefits.
- 3.b Albertans and visitors to Alberta’s provincial parks systems have opportunities for enjoyable and safe experiences in nature and a variety of nature-based outdoor recreation activities, which contributes to overall social well-being and resiliency.
- 3.c The park visitor satisfaction performance measure tracks progress toward Albertans’ satisfaction with the ministry’s delivery of Alberta Parks system, infrastructure, and operating facilities. Targets for this performance measure reflect an increased emphasis on Alberta parks facilities and services and an expectation that this emphasis and investment will result in increased levels of visitor satisfaction.

**Outcome Four: Protected public health and safety from environmental conditions and events**

As forecast by the science of climate change, catastrophic events such as floods, fires and drought will increase in frequency and severity. In addition, the negative health effects of air pollution, resulting in chronic respiratory conditions, hospital admissions, untimely deaths and a strain on the health care system are now better understood. The Climate Leadership Plan will significantly reduce air pollution from the electricity by ending coal power emissions and transitioning to cleaner sources of electricity. Under the plan, pollution from coal-fired electricity will be phased out by 2030. Environment and Parks is also playing a role in protecting Albertans through the delivery of the Climate Leadership Plan and significant investments for flood resiliency, including major infrastructure improvements for the city of Calgary and surrounding southern Alberta communities to avoid the impacts from another catastrophic flood as experienced in 2013.



Environment and Parks continues to work with Health, Municipal Affairs, the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, and other ministries and agencies to assure the public is protected now and in the future from the adverse effects of environmental conditions and events. Drinking water facilities that require an approval or registration under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* are regulated. Safety and economic impacts from environmental emergencies are addressed by ministry prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery measures. Ministry support is provided through education, training, planning, forecasting, assessment, coordination, recommendations for grant funding to municipalities and First Nations, and the management of water infrastructure, wildlife interaction and environmental emergencies. Examples of this include implementation of the Climate Leadership Plan, problem wildlife management, flood hazard mapping, flood forecasting, flood recovery and mitigation by water operations infrastructure management, flood and drought adaptation funding programs, and enhanced flow monitoring programs. Collaborative efforts by Albertans are key to assure protected public health and safety and to build community resilience to the impacts of catastrophic events.

#### **Key Strategies:**

- 4.1 Develop and implement plans and programs to anticipate and minimize impacts of catastrophic events and to protect communities, including:
  - a framework to address invasive species in Alberta;
  - ongoing human-wildlife conflict management; and
  - comprehensive flood and drought adaptation and mitigation plans to reduce community flood and drought vulnerability.
- 4.2 Upgrade existing and develop new capital infrastructure in provincial parks, protected areas and other public lands.
- 4.3 Improve and maintain provincially owned water management infrastructure including dams and canals to ensure public health and safety and to meet regulatory requirements.
- 4.4 Advancement of strategies and actions for safe and quality drinking water to Albertans and Indigenous communities.

#### **Performance Measure(s) under Development:**

Performance measure(s) are under development that reflect progress toward achieving protected public health and safety from environmental conditions and events.

## **RISKS TO ACHIEVING OUTCOMES**

Environment and Parks works to identify and manage key strategic risks that may influence or impact the ministry's ability to achieve outcomes and implement key strategies. The following risks represent ongoing work:

- Responding and adapting to future climate scenarios, including extreme events, climate variability, and biodiversity changes, is a risk that affects all ministries. Environment and Parks will work closely with the Alberta Climate Change Office to implement the government's Climate Leadership Plan.
- Demonstrating cohesive and integrated resource management through collaboration with Indigenous peoples, other governments, industry and other stakeholders will be a critical component to ensure shared responsibility in sustainable resource development and management of cumulative effects.
- Albertans expect clear and accurate information on environmental issues. Environment and Parks must ensure communications are timely and consistent to meet this expectation.

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)	Comparable			2017-18 Estimate	2018-19 Target	2019-20 Target
	2015-16 Actual	2016-17 Budget	2016-17 Forecast			
<b>REVENUE</b>						
Internal Government Transfers	1,462	3,154	3,154	<b>78,181</b>	41,051	37,065
Transfers from Government of Canada	8,086	685	2,030	<b>4,966</b>	3,077	701
Investment Income	2,611	44	3,044	<b>439</b>	339	339
Premiums, Fees and Licences	108,285	110,255	109,755	<b>119,621</b>	121,673	122,219
Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund	199,774	101,000	200,450	<b>196,000</b>	597,000	519,000
Other Revenue	57,613	71,380	73,049	<b>90,036</b>	94,907	95,955
Ministry Total	377,831	286,518	391,482	<b>489,243</b>	858,047	775,279
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(1,469)	(3,154)	(3,154)	<b>(93,154)</b>	(55,869)	(51,883)
Consolidated Total	376,362	283,364	388,328	<b>396,089</b>	802,178	723,396
<b>EXPENSE</b>						
Ministry Support Services	65,446	71,156	70,906	<b>73,326</b>	75,013	75,013
Air	41,020	17,565	17,965	<b>17,276</b>	17,802	17,802
Land	37,160	45,724	45,474	<b>51,984</b>	53,455	52,455
Water	71,199	76,528	82,973	<b>155,261</b>	153,841	151,465
Fish and Wildlife	24,846	24,503	24,503	<b>45,349</b>	48,609	48,046
Integrated Planning	29,678	39,076	39,076	<b>37,499</b>	38,197	38,197
Parks	92,587	92,451	96,135	<b>102,900</b>	100,086	99,507
Land Use Secretariat	5,689	10,305	10,305	<b>10,263</b>	10,448	10,448
Science and Monitoring	67,655	70,520	69,211	<b>75,798</b>	81,525	82,547
Emissions Management	7,371	-	-	-	-	-
Climate Leadership Plan	-	235,000	135,546	<b>454,758</b>	1,206,259	1,052,975
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	12,352	11,845	17,245	<b>9,324</b>	9,322	9,322
2013 Alberta Flooding	116,030	100,357	105,745	<b>20,050</b>	10,000	-
Ministry Total	571,033	795,030	715,084	<b>1,053,788</b>	1,804,557	1,637,777
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	(5,005)	(350)	(350)	<b>(15,323)</b>	(15,168)	(15,168)
Consolidated Total	566,028	794,680	714,734	<b>1,038,465</b>	1,789,389	1,622,609
Net Operating Result	(189,666)	(511,316)	(326,406)	<b>(642,376)</b>	(987,211)	(899,213)
<b>CAPITAL INVESTMENT</b>						
Ministry Support Services	-	425	425	<b>3,425</b>	2,725	3,152
Land	102	5,602	5,602	<b>5,602</b>	5,602	5,602
Water	108	-	-	<b>73,127</b>	36,697	32,284
Fish and Wildlife	104	297	297	<b>9,027</b>	9,017	4,893
Integrated Planning	7	-	-	-	-	-
Parks	18,658	31,220	26,708	<b>47,932</b>	51,432	51,432
Science and Monitoring	1,484	1,000	1,800	<b>1,000</b>	1,000	1,000
Climate Leadership Plan	-	-	150	<b>118,247</b>	-	-
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	8	17	17	<b>17</b>	17	17
2013 Alberta Flooding	5,596	110,129	150,277	<b>44,533</b>	75,000	25,000
Ministry Total	26,067	148,690	185,276	<b>302,910</b>	181,490	123,380
Inter-Ministry Consolidations	-	-	-	<b>(76,127)</b>	(38,997)	(35,011)
Consolidated Total	26,067	148,690	185,276	<b>226,783</b>	142,493	88,369