

# Environment and Sustainable Resource Development

BUSINESS PLAN 2014-17

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## ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This business plan was prepared under my direction, taking into consideration the government's policy decisions as of February 12, 2014.

*original signed by*

Robin Campbell, Minister  
February 18, 2014

## THE MINISTRY

The ministry consists of the Department of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund, the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Fund, the Land Stewardship Fund and the Natural Resources Conservation Board. Within the department's budget, funding is provided for the Surface Rights Board, the Land Compensation Board, the Environmental Appeal Board, the Public Lands Appeal Board, and the Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency (AEMERA), which are accountable to the minister. AEMERA's results are included in the ministry's consolidated financial statements; however, they are not consolidated within the ministry for budget reporting purposes.

Seven 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, Climate Change and Emissions Management Corporation, and the Forest Resource Improvement Association of Alberta.

As proud stewards of air, land, water and biodiversity, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development leads the achievement of desired environmental outcomes and sustainable development of natural resources for Albertans.

A more detailed description of Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and its programs, services and initiatives can be found at [www.esrd.alberta.ca](http://www.esrd.alberta.ca).

## RESULTS-BASED BUDGETING AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA STRATEGIC PLAN

Programs and services delivered by the ministry are reviewed for relevance, effectiveness and efficiency in accordance with the Government of Alberta's *Results-based Budgeting Act*.

This business plan supports the themes outlined in the *Government of Alberta Strategic Plan* in the following ways:

- Investing in Families and Communities. The ministry will continue working with community partners to build resilience in our communities so Albertans are prepared to respond and recover when a disaster occurs.
- Advancing World-leading Resource Stewardship. The ministry leads the development and coordination of the Integrated Resource Management System implementation and contributes to Alberta's market access expansion to become a preferred global supplier.

The plan supports the achievement of the following strategic goals set out in the government's strategic plan:

- Goal 1: Honour Alberta's Communities. The ministry provides wildfire and environmental emergency intervention to increase public safety.
- Goal 3: Healthy Albertans. The ministry takes incident prevention measures to support quality drinking water for Albertans.

- Goal 6: Innovative and Responsible Resource Development. The ministry works to ensure that Alberta's natural resources will be developed responsibly and managed in the interest of all Albertans.
- Goal 7: Build Relationships and Open New Markets. The ministry works to ensure Alberta's products are globally recognized as being produced responsibly.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

In a rapidly changing world, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development faces a number of significant and ongoing challenges. Global interest and enthusiasm grows for technological solutions to the environmental challenges we all face – a phenomenon that is exacerbated by the ability to use the ever-growing pool of data available. As a result of our strong economy, Alberta's population has increased to more than four million people. Municipalities of all sizes continue to grow, impacting the surrounding farm, range and forested lands. Neighborhoods on the edge of many Alberta municipalities continue to grow at unprecedented rates, putting pressure on the environment, community services and infrastructure. Albertan and other Western Canadian forest product companies have faced decades of challenges, with debate over Softwood Lumber Agreement, mountain pine beetle, increasing size and intensities of wildfires, competition for labour with the energy industry, and other initiatives that stress sustainability and profitability.

As economic and population growth continue in the province, the Government of Alberta can no longer afford to manage development in an incremental fashion. Such an approach makes it difficult to reconcile competing demands on the landscape and to understand the consequences of short-term actions on longer-term goals. Instead, the Government of Alberta needs to consider cumulative social, economic, and environmental impacts and to demonstrate this understanding in our decisions and decision-making processes. A key focus of this approach is enabled in the development and implementation of regional land-use plans under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* as part of the *Land-use Framework*. The ministry is leading and coordinating development of the Government of Alberta's Integrated Resource Management System that will set and achieve the environmental, economic and social outcomes Albertans expect from resource development.

In June 2013, devastating floods took place in Southern Alberta and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. Full recovery from the disasters will take years. The ministry is supporting the flood recovery and mitigation efforts through the implementation of an expedited regulatory authorization process and enhanced monitoring programs for sediment, drinking water, surface water and air. The ministry is also providing funding support through the Flood Recovery and Erosion Control program, the Backcountry Trails Rehabilitation Program and the Fisheries In-Stream Habitat Enhancement Program.

## GOALS, PRIORITY INITIATIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND INDICATORS

As a result of the ministry's review of its goals, environment, opportunities and challenges, a number of priority initiatives have been identified. Focused agenda items, several specific areas where government will focus its attention over the next three years, are identified with a \*. Additional government commitments to Albertans are identified with a ✓.

### Goal One: Healthy environment and ecosystems

To achieve air, water, land and biodiversity conditions that support healthy ecosystems, it is critical to manage the cumulative effects of human development on the environment. Stewardship of the environment requires a collaborative effort by everyone to achieve the outcomes that Albertans and the global communities expect. The ministry provides direction for environmental stewardship through the delivery of policy, regional plans and frameworks. Policy direction is assured by ministry education, outreach, authorizations and compliance programs, and reporting environmental conditions and trends. Industry, communities and citizens also play an important role in environmental stewardship by voluntarily undertaking best management practices and complying with regulatory requirements. Their actions to reduce the growth of greenhouse gas emissions, reduce air and water pollutants, manage

waste, minimize land disturbances, and manage forests and at-risk and invasive species are critical to achieve desired outcomes. The environmental outcomes of clean air, stable climate, quality water, healthy lands, forests, fish and wildlife contribute toward and enhance the quality of life of Albertans and global communities.

### Priority Initiatives:

- \* 1.1 Lead the implementation of the Integrated Resource Management System, by:
  - completing the *Land-use Framework* regional plans with the appropriate management frameworks for air, land, water and biodiversity that support long-term environmental leadership and growth;
  - establishing the Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency to provide open and transparent access to scientific data and information on Alberta's environmental conditions and trends; and
  - collaborating with Energy to implement the *Responsible Energy Development Act*, which establishes an integrated single regulator, the Alberta Energy Regulator, with responsibility for oil, oil sands, natural gas and coal development.
- ✓ 1.2 Develop open source environmental information systems.
- ✓ 1.3 Renew the *Climate Change Strategy*, including making Alberta the national leader in energy efficiency and sustainability.
- 1.4 Work with other ministries and the federal government to develop greenhouse gas emissions regulations that support the common goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions in alignment with economic and social objectives.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (Year)	Target 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17
1.a Total greenhouse gas emissions: • Success in meeting the total greenhouse gas emissions growth targets measured in million tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> equivalent, as outlined in <i>Alberta's 2008 Climate Change Strategy</i>	242 (2011)	246	251	254
1.b Municipal solid waste to landfills: • Kilograms of municipal solid waste per capita disposed of in landfills	691 (2012)	637	623	608

Performance Indicators	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)	Actual (Year)
1.a Air quality index: • Quality of Alberta's air based on five major pollutants: carbon monoxide, nitrogen, dioxide, ozone, sulphur dioxide and fine particulate matter		93% (2010)	95% (2011)	97% (2012)
Good air quality days				
1.b River water quality index: • Water quality of six major Alberta rivers systems at key sites, based on data of four groups of variables (metals, bacteria, nutrients and pesticides), which are averaged to provide an overall water quality rating	6/6 (2008-09)	5/6 (2009-10)	5/6 (2010-11)	4/6 (2011-12)
River systems had good to excellent water quality				
1.c Viability of fish and wildlife populations: • Percentage of species at risk <sup>1</sup>			2.2% (2005)	3.6% (2010)

#### Note:

1 Results reported every five years.

## Goal Two: Sustainable natural resource development

Managing the development, consumption and use of natural resources in a sustainable manner is essential to assure a continued supply for current and future generations. A collaborative environmental stewardship approach to development supports achieving the balance between environmental and economic outcomes. The ministry provides environmental stewardship direction and regulates access, allocation and use of natural resources through planning, policy and policy assurance programs. As stewards of the environment, industry, communities and citizens take actions to comply with timber, fish and wildlife harvest limits, reforestation requirements, water use limits, and timely reclamation and remediation of lands. Stewardship actions are critical to achieve sustainable forests, fish and wildlife populations and habitats, productive and sustainable lands, and water supplies that meet environmental, economic, and social needs for generations to come.

### Priority Initiatives:

- ✓ 2.1 Develop a land reclamation framework, including strategies to address abandoned energy infrastructure.
- 2.2 Develop and implement an Alberta Forest Strategy that provides long-term, provincial strategic guidance and support to the ministry's policy, resource management and land use planning regarding use of Alberta's public forests.
- 2.3 Work with the federal government to implement a strategic coordinated approach to federal regulatory reform that enables responsible natural resource development.

Performance Measure	Last Actual 2011-12	Target 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17
2.a Sustainable timber harvest by:				
• Annual allowable cut (million cubic metres)	30			
• Harvest (million cubic metres)	20	Harvest does not exceed annual allowable cut		

Performance Indicator	Actual 2010-11	Actual 2011-12
2.a Sustainable forests:		
• Percentage of forest regrowth attained as a result of reforestation	97.4%	97.6%

## Goal Three: Economic and social benefit

Sustainable development of our natural resources, product diversification and expanded market access support a healthy economy for the benefit of Albertans and global communities. The ministry regulates and collects revenue from the sustainable development of natural resources. Revenue from timber royalties, hunting and fishing licences, grazing leases, public land dispositions, water leases, remediation, reclamation, and sand and gravel support valuable services for Albertans. The ministry also supports trade relationships and natural resource product diversification through policy, education and advocacy work. Development, diversification, and the use of natural resources and associated products by industry, citizens, and domestic and global communities provide diversified revenue streams and employment for the province. Social and recreational opportunities are also supported by sustainable natural resources and a healthy environment. The ministry issues hunting and fishing licences that provide access to natural resources for the benefit of Albertans and visitors.

### Priority Initiatives:

- \*3.1 Expand Alberta's market access to become a preferred global supplier for natural resources and products.
- 3.2 Partner with other ministries and the forest industry sector to advance the Alberta Forest Products Roadmap which identifies opportunities for diversifying forest products and markets.

Performance Measures	Last Actual (Year)	Target 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17
3.a Sustainable economic prosperity from public lands: • Ratio of Alberta government resource revenue to department expenditure on managing public lands	186:1 (2011-12)	>100:1	>100:1	>100:1
3.b Opportunities for economic, social and recreational development: • Percentage change in fishing licences • Percentage change in hunting licences	6.4% 5.5% (2012-13)	> Rolling average of last five years' results		

#### Goal Four: Protected public and environment

To assure public safety the ministry regulates drinking water facilities that require an approval or registration under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*. The ministry also addresses the safety of the public and environmental and economic impacts from wildfires and environmental emergencies through prevention and intervention measures. The ministry provides support through education, training, planning, forecasting, assessment, coordination, management of water infrastructure, and response to wildfire and environmental emergencies. Recent examples include the ministry assistance with the flood recovery and mitigation support through management of water operations infrastructure (dams, canals), flood erosion control programming and enhanced flood monitoring programs. Also, collaborative efforts by industry, communities and citizens to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from environmental emergencies and wildfires are essential to assure public protection and environment protection and resiliency.

#### Priority Initiatives:

- \*4.1 Update modeling and warning systems against future events such as wildfires, flooding or mountain stream erosion to support Albertans' future preparedness and resiliency.
- 4.2 Implement accepted recommendations from Flat Top Complex Wildfire Review Committee Final Report.

Performance Measure	Last Actual 2012	Target 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Target 2016-17
4.a Containment of wildfires: • Percentage of wildfires contained before 10 .a.m. the day following assessment	97.9%	> Rolling average of last five years' results		

Performance Indicator	Actual 2009	Actual 2010	Actual 2011	Actual 2012
4.a Drinking water quality index: • Percentage of facilities with no significant drinking water quality incidents	95%	96%	96%	94%

**OPERATIONAL PLAN**

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable			<b>2014-15 Estimate</b>	2015-16 Target	2016-17 Target
	2012-13 Actual	2013-14 Budget	2013-14 Forecast			
<b>OPERATIONAL EXPENSE</b>						
Ministry Support Services	56,295	53,679	52,379	<b>52,523</b>	52,525	52,819
Air	19,958	17,256	17,406	<b>18,933</b>	18,991	19,128
Land	56,967	50,402	49,102	<b>51,874</b>	52,330	52,653
Water	68,089	72,315	72,315	<b>73,644</b>	72,545	72,953
Fish and Wildlife	30,734	29,855	29,855	<b>32,536</b>	32,587	32,728
Integrated Planning	8,881	12,600	12,600	<b>19,097</b>	19,764	19,875
Forests	448,535	168,873	332,973	<b>204,692</b>	211,639	220,435
Climate Change	32,682	4,198	4,198	<b>5,038</b>	4,932	4,961
Land Use Secretariat	6,892	8,082	8,082	<b>14,741</b>	14,610	14,696
Science and Monitoring	33,474	70,055	44,755	<b>15,599</b>	-	-
Alberta Environmental Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Agency	-	-	-	<b>59,000</b>	74,538	74,681
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	9,276	10,732	10,732	<b>11,507</b>	11,367	11,434
2013 Alberta Flooding	-	-	1,895	<b>13,465</b>	7,000	3,800
Sub-total	771,783	498,047	636,292	<b>572,649</b>	572,828	580,163
Debt Servicing						
Forests	376	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidation Adjustments	(376)	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>771,783</b>	<b>498,047</b>	<b>636,292</b>	<b>572,649</b>	<b>572,828</b>	<b>580,163</b>

**CAPITAL PLAN SPENDING**

Ministry Support Services	460	-	-	-	-	425
Air	7	-	-	-	-	-
Land	17,242	5,000	17,600	<b>5,000</b>	5,000	6,895
Water	1,003	-	-	-	-	-
Fish and Wildlife	469	-	-	-	-	297
Forests	29,645	24,568	28,295	<b>16,383</b>	7,258	8,443
Climate Change	91,997	95,548	83,249	<b>72,299</b>	60,000	60,000
Science and Monitoring	7,527	800	800	<b>800</b>	800	1,000
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	32	17	17	<b>17</b>	17	17
2013 Alberta Flooding	-	-	176,000	<b>25,600</b>	3,400	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>148,382</b>	<b>125,933</b>	<b>305,961</b>	<b>120,099</b>	<b>76,475</b>	<b>77,077</b>