



Environment and Protected Areas

Ministry Business Plan

Environment and Protected Areas

Business Plan 2024-27

Ministry Fact Sheet – Mandate and Structure

The Ministry of Environment and Protected Areas works to protect and enhance the environment and ecosystems throughout the province, while supporting economic prosperity, quality of life and a sustainable future for Albertans, positioning Alberta as a leader in environmental management. Working collaboratively with others through consultation and engagement and using the best available scientific, local and Indigenous knowledge, the department informs the ministry's delivery of relevant, efficient and environmentally focused legislation, standards, and policy. With a common sense, made-in Alberta approach, the ministry works to meet the needs of communities, Indigenous Peoples, and job creators without compromising conservation values and recreational opportunities across Alberta.

The Alberta Crown Land Vision outlines the ministry's approach for the continued conservation of Crown land and biodiversity to ensure sustainable land uses in the future. As environment and ecosystem health and integrity are indispensable to the safety and well-being of Albertans, the ministry advances regional and sub-regional land-use plans, environmental management frameworks, and complementary strategies to support the protection and recovery of species at risk, the sustainable use of fish and wildlife, and habitat conservation. The Land Use Secretariat and the Integrated Resource Management Secretariat lead cross-ministry integration, regional planning and collaboration in resource management and policy development throughout the province. The ministry also works with the Ministry of Forestry and Parks, Indigenous communities and organizations, and stakeholders to integrate environmental conservation and stewardship, and to ensure Treaty rights, Métis harvesting activities and traditional uses are respected.

To help conserve and restore critically important habitat, mitigate future disaster events, enable innovative research, and support engagement opportunities, the ministry administers grant programs including the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program and others. Work continues with non-profit organizations and municipalities to replace wetlands and prioritize work through the Wetland Replacement Program in areas of the highest wetland loss. The ministry also administers the Land Stewardship Fund to maintain large tracts of native landscapes, conserve connecting corridors for biodiversity, and sustain disconnected pockets of native habitats within fragmented landscapes.

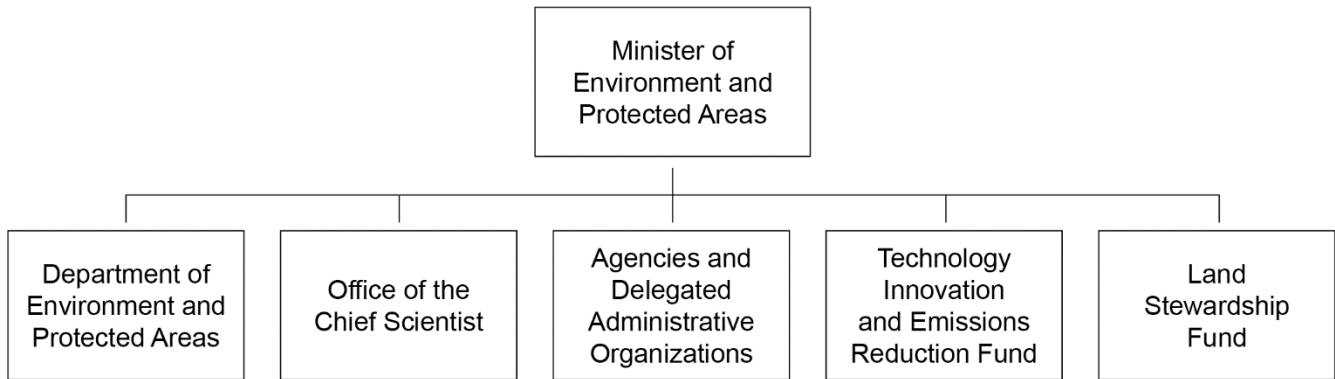
As a well-functioning environmental regulatory system is essential to Alberta's economy and future investment, the ministry continues to eliminate unnecessary regulatory requirements to improve the government service experience for Albertans. Alberta's regulatory system supports community and economic development while maintaining high-quality environmental health in Alberta through legislation, policies and plans. The ministry is advancing the Regulatory Transformation Project which supports outcomes-based decisions, and is consistent, transparent and agile with clear accountability within a common risk management framework.

Alberta's sustainable economic development, including job creation opportunities, is supported through the implementation of the Emissions Reduction and Energy Development Plan. This plan reduces emissions, attracts investment, works with Indigenous communities, supports jobs and reinforces Alberta's reputation for technological expertise while remaining a responsible, reliable and secure energy producer. The ministry will work to assess Alberta's carbon sink capacity, and support utilization of innovative technology and clean energy to enable global emission reductions. The ministry also delivers the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) regulatory system to drive investment in clean technology and innovation, and provide certainty and stability for investment into large emission reducing projects while maintaining industry competitiveness.

The Office of the Chief Scientist provides the ministry with expert environmental science knowledge, research, and advice to address the complex environmental challenges and opportunities facing Alberta and provides oversight of Alberta's Environmental Science Program that reports on the condition of Alberta's environment. The Office also promotes scientific excellence and integrity using an evidence-based risk informed approach, inclusive of Indigenous knowledge, citizen science and community-based monitoring.

Ongoing collaboration with other ministries, partner agencies, strategic partnerships and municipalities enhances Alberta’s ability to deal with the adverse effects of environmental conditions and events and develops key environmental solutions for our province. The ministry in collaboration with municipalities, supports responses to environmental emergencies and strengthens environmental resilience and adaptation to a changing climate while also developing comprehensive response plans and programs. To proactively protect Alberta communities at risk of future natural disaster, the ministry will continue to work with Public Safety and Emergency Services to develop a flood mitigation strategy and with Forestry and Parks on wildfire management.

The Ministry of Environment and Protected Areas provides oversight of 21 public agencies that conduct work on behalf of or provide advice to the government. Twelve of the agencies are accountable solely to the Minister of Environment and Protected Areas, seven are common responsibility between Environment and Protected Areas and Forestry and Parks, one is shared with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, and one is shared with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. Information on these public agencies is available at www.alberta.ca/public-agency-list.cfm.



A more detailed description of Environment and Protected Areas and its programs and initiatives can be found at <https://www.alberta.ca/environment-and-protected-areas.aspx>.

The Ministry of Environment and Protected Areas remains committed to regulatory approaches and program delivery that reduce unnecessary government oversight and emphasizes outcomes, in order to improve access to government services, attract investment, support innovation and competitiveness, and grow Alberta businesses.

Ministry business plans should be considered in conjunction with all budget documents - including the Fiscal Plan, Government Strategic Plan, and Estimates - which work together to provide a complete overview of government’s commitment to responsible fiscal management.

2024-27 Business Plan

Outcome 1

Environment and ecosystem health and integrity are vital to Albertans' well-being and safety

Alberta's environment and ecosystem health and integrity are the foundation for Alberta's economic prosperity and positively contribute to both human health and quality of life. Leadership and effective consultation, collaboration and partnerships in land-use plans, and environmental frameworks and strategies combined with appropriate data collection and interpretation, guide the ministry's efforts and commitments. Environment and Protected Areas works with other ministries and agencies to protect Albertans from the adverse effects of environmental conditions and events.

Key Objectives

- 1.1 Maintain and strengthen the land-use planning system and approaches for cumulative effects management along with an enhanced regulatory framework with high environmental standards, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- 1.2 Strengthen environmental resource stewardship and conservation through working in partnerships with municipalities, non-profit organizations, industry and Indigenous communities to ensure water management maximizes water availability while maintaining the highest standards of water conservation and treatment, airsheds remain healthy and Alberta is well-positioned to move to a more circular economy that minimizes waste.
- 1.3 Deliver scientifically based environmental condition monitoring, evaluation, and reporting with partners to support environment and resource stewardship and Albertans' safety.
- 1.4 Continue the protection, conservation and sustainable management of fish and wildlife.
- 1.5 Develop and implement ways to make water more available to support Alberta's growing economy and communities and to also mitigate the adverse effects of flood and drought, while maintaining a high standard of aquatic environmental conservation.
- 1.6 Prevent the entry of aquatic invasive species into Alberta and implement rapid response measures to mitigate impacts if invasive species are detected.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- \$14.8 million allocated to support strategic partnerships in the shared stewardship of air, water, land, and biodiversity in 2024-2025.
- \$7.6 million is allocated for land-use planning and stewardship tools in 2024-25.
- \$22.2 million is allocated to conservation programs including \$10 million from the Land Stewardship Fund in 2024-25.
- \$54.4 million in dedicated revenue is provided by industry to support the multi-stakeholder Oil Sands Monitoring Program.
- \$47.7 million is allocated to effectively anticipate, respond to and mitigate the impact of environmental conditions and events including floods, droughts and invasive species.
- \$59.3 million is allocated to fisheries management including the provincial fish stocking program in 2024-25 to improve angling opportunities.

Performance Metrics

1.a Performance Measure: Legacy seismic line footprint in the caribou ranges that received restoration treatment

This is a new performance measure and reports on the amount of legacy seismic lines that have been assessed and have received restoration treatment through the Caribou Habitat Recovery Program during the past year. Restoration of boreal ecosystems contributes to carbon sequestering and conservation of biodiversity, provides habitats that support species populations, and provides ecosystem services. Last actual was 1,000 km in 2022.

Targets	2024-25	2,000 km	2025-26	2,500 km	2026-27	2,500 km
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1.b Performance Indicator: Legacy seismic line footprint in the caribou ranges

This is a new performance indicator and reports on the remaining legacy seismic lines within Alberta's 15 caribou ranges. The reduction of these seismic lines is measured through the assessment of natural regrowth, conversion to other land uses and restoration treatments. Restoration treatments of legacy seismic lines are reported through performance measure 1a. Restoration of boreal ecosystems contributes to carbon sequestering and conservation of biodiversity, provides habitats that support species population, and provides ecosystem services. Results are reported every two years.

2022

Legacy seismic line footprint in the caribou ranges	209,000 km
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1.c Performance Indicator: Percentage of vertebrate species designated as 'at risk'

The species at risk results provide an important indication of the state of ecological integrity, biodiversity on the landscape and ecosystem health. Species more sensitive to change can exhibit population decreases that can have cascading impacts on other species and ecosystem components and services, therefore signaling when special management and recovery actions are necessary.

	2005	2010	2015	2020
Per cent of vertebrate species designated at-risk	3.4	3.7	4.2	3.9

Outcome 2

Sustainable economic development is achieved within environmental capacity

For Alberta, a resource-based economy, to have sustainable economic development that offers Albertans job creation opportunities and the quality of life they desire, responsible development needs to occur within the environment's capacity. Environment and Protected Areas continues to work to balance interrelated environment, economy, and social needs.

Key Objectives

- 2.1 Continue implementation of the province-wide regulatory system transformation to enhance administrative and regulatory efficiency and effectiveness; and implement key Designated Industrial Zones to reduce red tape, streamline regulatory approvals, and attract job-creating investments for Albertans.
- 2.2 Drive economy-wide decarbonization through the Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction (TIER) regulatory system, investment in technological innovation and deployment, and implementation of Alberta's Emission Reduction and Energy Development Plan.
- 2.3 Develop a nature strategy that supports a range of Crown land uses and conservation outcomes that sustain economic and societal benefits from nature.
- 2.4 Improve and streamline reclamation and remediation through effective liability management (including water-related liabilities such as excess oil sands mine water on sites), reclamation and remediation policies, and business processes.
- 2.5 Continue establishing land-use plans and reviewing existing land-use plans for management of the many values and uses of landscapes across the province, to support identification and achievement of economic, environmental and social outcomes.

Initiatives Supporting Key Objectives

- In 2024-25, \$215.2 million derived from the TIER system is allocated to support investments in innovation and technology in Alberta.
- \$38.1 million is allocated for caribou recovery planning and actions in 2024-25.
- \$15 million is allocated to establish new land-use plans and reviewing existing land-use plans in 2024-25.
- \$6.6 million is allocated to continue the digital regulatory assurance system build as part of the regulatory system transformation to enhance administrative and regulatory efficiency and effectiveness in 2024-25.
- \$50.5 million is allocated to the designated industrial zone pilot in 2024-25 which will reduce red tape and streamline regulatory approvals to help attract new investment and job creation for Albertans.

Performance Metrics

2.a Performance Measure: Percentage of provincial greenhouse gas emissions priced by the province

Provincially priced emissions are those covered directly by Alberta's TIER Regulation. These emissions are from facilities emitting more than 100,000 tonnes annually, those that emit more than 2,000 tonnes annually that have opted into the regulation, and those from multiple facilities under common ownership that have opted into the regulation as aggregated facilities. Pricing of greenhouse gas emissions through provincial regulation furthers responsible and sustainable economic development in Alberta by providing a financial incentive to lower greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. Last actual was 62 per cent in 2021.

Targets	2024-25	63%	2025-26	63%	2026-27	63%
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2.b Performance Indicator: Electricity greenhouse gas emissions intensity

Tracking Alberta's electricity systems emissions intensity helps to determine how the industrial emissions pathway is being altered as a result of policy and legislation, in particular, the pricing of carbon from large industrial emitters.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Emissions intensity (kg/MWh)	760	630	630	590	510

2.c Performance Indicator: Oil sands greenhouse gas production emissions intensity

Reports on the total greenhouse gas emissions in tonnes per cubic meter of oil sands production. The oil sands represent a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions in Alberta. Tracking oil sands emissions intensity helps to assess the effectiveness of climate change policy and legislation.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Insitu	0.438	0.445	0.437	0.420	0.413
Mined	0.218	0.215	0.251	0.249	0.244
Mine with Integrated Upgrade	0.464	0.453	0.497	0.486	0.499

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

(thousands of dollars)

(thousands of dollars)	Comparable		2024-25 Estimate	2025-26 Target	2026-27 Target
	2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Forecast			
REVENUE					
Transfers from Government of Canada	45,081	60,122	30,229	30,397	15,780
Investment Income	7,925	25,676	16,103	12,690	9,540
Premiums, Fees and Licences	9,130	6,430	9,130	9,130	9,130
Technology Innovation and Emissions Reduction Fund	516,000	826,238	524,000	243,000	170,000
Other Revenue	63,013	69,118	69,044	69,717	69,717
Ministry Total	641,149	987,584	648,506	364,934	274,167
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(11,830)	(11,830)	(13,501)	(14,174)	(14,174)
Consolidated Total	629,319	975,754	635,005	350,760	259,993
EXPENSE					
Ministry Support Services	22,607	22,607	21,948	22,052	22,136
Air	13,039	13,431	11,908	12,801	13,081
Land	29,682	34,732	32,434	33,423	33,638
Water	98,592	135,129	95,297	88,402	84,766
Fish and Wildlife	69,987	61,553	67,932	71,409	56,712
Integrated Planning	33,980	33,280	35,592	50,022	42,843
Land Use Secretariat	5,046	1,646	7,423	7,391	7,345
Science and Monitoring	70,569	70,431	74,956	75,323	75,540
Emissions Management	209,431	88,962	216,253	84,668	118,558
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	7,753	43,034	7,941	8,081	8,188
Ministry Total	560,686	504,805	571,684	453,572	462,807
Inter-Ministry Consolidation Adjustment	(12,825)	(12,825)	(14,496)	(15,169)	(15,169)
Consolidated Total	547,861	491,980	557,188	438,403	447,638
Net Operating Result	81,458	483,774	77,817	(87,643)	(187,645)
CAPITAL INVESTMENT					
Ministry Support Services	425	1,781	425	425	425
Air	392	-	-	-	-
Land	5,602	702	5,602	5,602	5,602
Water	8,701	5,997	5,713	3,500	-
Fish and Wildlife	38,876	10,586	48,650	5,039	2,437
Integrated Planning	2,500	2,350	1,600	300	-
Science and Monitoring	2,900	6,480	3,560	2,905	3,075
Quasi-Judicial Bodies	17	34	17	17	17
Consolidated Total	59,413	27,930	65,567	17,788	11,556