

Task Force on Regulatory Enhancement

Terms of Reference

WHEREAS the Alberta Competitiveness Act (Bill 1) calls for the creation of effective regulatory systems that deliver the results Albertans require and that provide clarity, predictability, certainty and efficiency;

WHEREAS the mandates for the Ministers of Energy, Sustainable Resource Development and Environment include the long-term streamlining and rationalization of the natural resource regulatory system and identifying improvements that promote environmentally responsible clean energy development ;

WHEREAS it is in the public interest to have an effective and efficient regulatory system that considers the interests of all Alberta stakeholders, promotes sustainable development and assures the proper balance among economic, environmental and social outcomes;

WHEREAS many of the concerns raised by natural resource industries regarding the current regulatory system are well documented and include: multiple regulators and points of entry for applications, lengthy time for approvals, lack of inter-agency coordination, increasing regulatory costs to industry, and lack of clarity, consistency and predictability;

WHEREAS the need for a coordinated and integrated effort to review regulatory systems for natural resource development across government is necessary and timely;

THEREFORE, the Government of Alberta has initiated a review of Alberta's regulatory systems to ensure that they effectively support a competitive economy.

The following terms of reference apply in respect of the Task Force on Regulatory Enhancement:

ROLE: Reporting to the Minister of Energy, the Task Force will fulfill a key role in Alberta's regulatory review efforts for natural resources within the Departments of Energy, Sustainable Resource Development, Environment, and the Energy Resources Conservation Board and will:

- support a comprehensive natural resource regulatory review initiative within government;
- engage with senior officials and heads of regulatory bodies to confirm direction of overall regulatory review efforts;
- engage with members of the legislature to build support for and overcome barriers to regulatory review efforts and proposals;
- facilitate key stakeholder meetings and workshops and assist in identifying key stakeholders;
- support the Ministers of Energy, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development to communicate and reinforce key messages and outcomes to industry and other stakeholders concerning government's overall direction on regulatory review efforts; and
- communicate critical stakeholder issues, input and feedback on the regulatory system to senior officials for follow-up.

GOVERNANCE

The Task Force members are:

Chair, Parliamentary Assistant, Alberta Energy

Vice Chair, Parliamentary Assistant, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development

Vice Chair, Parliamentary Assistant, Alberta Environment

The Task Force will be supported by a cross-ministry secretariat of officials, reporting to a steering team composed of the Deputy Ministers of Energy, Environment, Sustainable Resource Development, Justice and the Chair of the Energy Resources Conservation Board.

SPECIFIC ACTIONS:

- The Task Force will implement a comprehensive review of Alberta's regulatory system for resource development. This review will be broad-based and will engage with industry and other stakeholders to ensure Alberta's regulatory system is modern, efficient, performance-based and competitive; and continues to maintain Alberta's strong commitment to environmental protection, public safety and responsible resource development in the public interest.

- The Task Force will:
 - include representation from industry and institutes related to the three participating departments
 - facilitate meetings and workshops with industry, government and other stakeholder representatives
 - report to the Minister on recommended enhancements to the regulatory system that could be implemented within six months, including the following:
 - The Alberta government will accelerate the shift to an outcome-based approach for assuring policy objectives and improving environmental performance.
 - Regulatory bodies will work together to put coordinated compliance inspections in place by October 2010.
 - Alberta Environment will streamline the review process for Pre-Disturbance Assessments (PDA).
 - The ERCB will streamline processes for:
 - Commercial in-situ oil sands development approval amendments.
 - Harmonization of well spacing in Development Entities 1 and 2.
 - deliver periodic progress reports, the first of which will be within 90 days regarding the implementation of near term enhancements (as above), changes to support and facilitate the deployment of new technology; and the process for comprehensive review of the regulatory system going forward, including the establishment of specific milestones for progress.
 - establish measureable objectives for the regulatory system and benchmark against other jurisdictions to support continued competitiveness.
 - issue a final report by December 31, 2010 and make recommendations for:
 - a renewed regulatory system
 - alignment of regulatory system with government policy direction
 - implementation strategies, including legislative changes as required