

News Release

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ERCB RELEASES DRAFT DIRECTIVE ON OIL SANDS TAILINGS MANAGEMENT AND ENFORCEMENT CRITERIA

Calgary, Alberta (June 26, 2008) The Alberta Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) has released a draft Directive entitled *Tailings Performance Criteria and Requirements for Oil Sands Mining Schemes*, which develops new industry-wide criteria for managing oil sands tailings, and specific enforcement actions if tailings performance targets are not met.

The draft directive requires operators to:

- Prepare an operations and abandonment plan for every consolidated tailings pond, which would be reviewed for the establishment of performance measures by the ERCB,
- Operate and abandon each consolidated tailings pond in accordance with their applications or ERCB approvals,
- Consume fine fluid tailings as proposed in their applications or as approved by the ERCB, and
- Specify dates for pond construction, pond use, pond closure, and other milestones and file these dates with the ERCB by December 31, 2009.

“The ERCB plays a critical role in regulating the oil sands. Tailings ponds are an important environmental issue in Alberta – and more and more, becoming the focus of national and international attention,” said ERCB Chairman Dan McFadyen. “Many of the oil sands projects are not meeting the targets for the management of fluid fine tailings set out in their applications to the Board. This Directive will set firm requirements for oil sands operators to manage their tailings – and meet those requirements – or face enforcement action.”

The draft Directive was prepared in collaboration with Alberta Environment, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Energy, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, and the Alberta Energy Research Institute. The ERCB conducted a technical review of the Directive with representatives from Alberta’s energy industry in May 2008.

Industry and interested parties will have the opportunity to provide input on the draft Directive to the ERCB until September 15, 2008. The ERCB plans to have the finalized Directive in effect this fall.

“Tailings” is a term used to describe waste from oil sands extraction processes. This waste is generally composed of water, sands, silt, clay and residual bitumen. Alberta’s inventory of fluid fine tailings that require long term containment is now 720 million cubic metres.

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The draft Directive can be found at www.ercb.ca

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