

# across the board

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## EUB Publishes Informational Letter on Minimizing Surface Disturbance in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas

In 1989 the EUB (then known as the ERCB) held a public hearing concerning an application to construct a well and access road on areas of native prairie grassland. One recommendation resulting from that hearing was to have the jurisdictions responsible for petroleum industry activities jointly prepare a set of consistent guidelines that would help industry minimize the extent to which native prairie is altered during oil and gas development.

In September 1992, the ERCB issued *Informational Letter (IL) 92-12: Guidelines for Minimizing Disturbance on Native Prairie Areas*. At the time those guidelines were issued, the collaborating agencies committed to ongoing monitoring of the effectiveness of the guidelines and to their periodic revision.

*IL 92-12* was subsequently revised, and *IL 96-9: Revised Guidelines for Minimizing Disturbance on Native Prairie Areas* was released. As part of the ongoing commitment to monitor the effectiveness of the guidelines, a review of *IL 96-9* was undertaken over the past two years. Regulators have seen a dramatic improvement by the petroleum industry with respect to minimal disturbance practices on native prairie since the first IL on this subject was released. The most recent review and the resulting IL reflect the recognition by both industry and regulatory agencies of the need to continually improve on the methods used to minimize impacts on native prairie land.

*IL 2001-3: Principles for Minimizing Surface Disturbance in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas* provides the guiding principles for regulatory expectations for the petroleum industry when conducting activities in native prairie and parkland areas. It was endorsed by a number of regulatory agencies with environmental responsibilities, including

Alberta Environment, Alberta Sustainable Resource Development, Alberta Energy, the Special Areas Board, and the EUB.

Native prairie and parkland landscapes are diverse and include a variety of unique plant and animal species. These landscapes have multiple use values (e.g., recreation, livestock grazing) and environmental significance (e.g., wildlife habitat). Many rare or at-risk species are concentrated on the southern prairies of Canada, and grasslands are a conservation priority in North America.

If activities are to be conducted on native prairie and parkland, emphasis is given to implementing a minimal disturbance approach. The IL identifies 14 principles for minimizing disturbance, the first of which is to avoid disturbing native prairie and parkland when ever possible. Predevelopment planning is seen to be an essential element for not only reducing environmental impacts, but also reducing costs for site reclamation and decreasing the risk of incurring environmental liability. The IL also discusses the need for industry to make every effort to reduce overall effects, including coordination and cooperation with other native prairie and parkland users. Appropriate public consultation is also important, as well as identification of unique features (e.g., historical resources), prior to any development taking place.

There is an expectation that qualified environmental specialists will be retained to assist with project planning and reclamation activities, and companies are encouraged to involve anyone associated with their project in education and training sessions specific to the unique requirements of native prairie and parkland operations. Part of minimizing disturbance includes the concept

## About the EUB

Our mission is to ensure that the discovery, development, and delivery of Alberta's resources take place in a manner that is fair, responsible, and in the public interest. We regulate oil, natural gas, oil sands, coal, hydro and electric energy, pipelines, and transmission line development. On the utilities side, we regulate investor-owned natural gas, electric, and water utilities to ensure that customers receive safe and reliable service at just and reasonable rates. Regulation is done through four core functions: adjudication and regulation, applications, surveillance and enforcement, and information.

## For Your Information...

## Recent EUB Publications

## Informational Letters

**IL 2002-1:** Principles for Minimizing Surface Disturbance in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas

## Guides

**Guide 29:** Energy and Utility Development Applications and the Hearing Process (draft)

**Guide 29A:** EUB Hearing Process and Local Inter-veners' Costs for Energy and Utility Development Applications (draft)

**Draft Guide:** Emergency Management Requirements for the Upstream Petroleum Industry

## Statistical Series

**ST-59:** Alberta Drilling Activity Monthly Statistics (to November 2001)

## Recent Decisions

**March 12:** UNCA 2001-2002 Distribution Tariff Application - Addendum to January 17, 2002, Disposition - Option B and Transmission Contributions for Independently Owned Distribution Systems (Decision 2002-29)

**March 8:** ATCO Electric Ltd. and EPCOR Energy Services (Alberta) Inc. 2001 Regulated Rate Option Outstanding Matters Reasons for Denial of Motion by Senior Petroleum Producers Association (Decision 2002-28)

**February 28:** AltaGas Utilities Inc. Disposition of Gas Storage Contracts (Decision 2002-22)

**February 22:** EPCOR Energy Services (Alberta) Inc. Interim Recommendation on Regulated Rate Option Collection Shortfall Charge to Certain Rural Electrification Associations (Decision 2002-21)

**February 21:** ATCO Gas - North, A Division of ATCO Gas and Pipelines Ltd. Distribution of Proceeds from Sale of Producing Properties (Decision 2001-18)

**February 19:** Comstate Resources Ltd. Application for Sweet Natural Gas Pipeline Pembina Field (Decision 2002-20)

**February 19:** Decision 2002-19: ESBI Alberta Ltd. Duplication Avoidance Tariff Application - Imperial Oil Cold Lake Industrial Site (Decision 2002-19)

**February 12:** TransAlta Energy Corporation 900-MW Keephills Power Plant Expansion, Application 2001200 (Decision 2002-14)

**February 7:** ESBI Alberta Ltd. Transmission Congestion Management Principles Application. Part A: Scope of Proceeding (Decision 2002-17)

**February 5:** TransAlta Utilities Corporation 138-kV Transmission Facilities in the Vulcan Area (Decision 2002-12)

**February 5:** NOVA Gas Transmission Ltd.

Application for Approval of Costs Delivery Service to the Fort McMurray Area (Decision 2002-16)

**February 5:** ATCO Electric Ltd. Additional Right-of-Way for 240-kV Line 9L59, Hanna Area (Board Member Report 2002-10)

**February 5:** EPCOR Energy Services Inc. Interim and Final Recommendations to the Council of the Town of Ponoka Regarding a Regulated Rate Option Collection Shortfall Charge Interim Recommendation (Decision 2002-5)

**February 5:** Olympia Energy Inc. Application for a Sweet Natural Gas Compressor Station Bottrel Field (Examiner Report 2002-1)

**January 30:** 2001-2002 General Tariff Application Part F: Amendment to Decision 2002 Distribution Tariff Base Rates (Decision 2001-102, Decision 2002-13)

**January 29:** ATCO Electric Ltd. 2001-2002 Isolated Generation Application - Issues Removed from the Affiliates Proceeding (Decision 2002-15)

**January 25:** 2000 Pool Price Deferral Accounts Part N: AE GENCO, TransAlta Genco & EPCOR Generation Inc. Refilings (Decision 2002-8)

**January 22:** Year 2000 Outstanding Matters Deferral Accounts (Other than Pool Price) Part D: AE GENCO-TRANSCO Refiling (Decision 2002-3)

**January 22:** Year 2000 Outstanding Matters Deferral Accounts (Other than Pool Price) Part E: EGI GENCO Refiling (Decision 2002-6)

**January 22:** Year 2000 Outstanding Matters Deferral Accounts (Other than Pool Price) Part F: TransAlta GENCO Supplemental Refiling (Decision 2002-7)

**January 22:** Talisman Energy Inc. Applications to Construct and Operate a Sour Gas Battery and Pipeline and to Amend an Existing Pipeline Licence Grande Prairie Field (Clairmont Area) (Decision 2002-11)

**January 22:** UtiliCorp Networks Canada (Alberta) Ltd. Interim 2002 Distribution Tariff Application Interim 2002 Rates and Riders (Decision 2001-113 Errata)

**January 15:** ESBI Alberta Ltd. Reliability Criteria Agreement Third Amendment (Decision 2002-4)

**January 15:** Errata: ATCO Pipelines South 2001/2002 General Rate Application Phases I and II (Decision 2001-97)

**January 4:** Methodology for Managing Gas Supply Portfolios and Determining Gas Cost Recovery Rates Proceeding and Gas Rate Unbundling Proceeding. Part B-2: Deferred Gas Account Reconciliation for ATCO Gas-North (Decision 2002-2)

**January 3:** ATCO Gas-North Compliance Filing from the Approval of the Westlock and Lloydminster Sales Pursuant to Decisions 2001-46 and 2001-65 (Decision 2002-1)

## EUB Publishes Informational Letter on Minimizing Surface Disturbance in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas

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of locating new developments on previously disturbed lands where possible, as well as timing activities to minimize impacts (e.g., shutting down operations during excessive wet weather). Expectations for reclamation, erosion control, and monitoring and follow-up work are all identified in *IL 2002-1* as key components for successful minimal disturbance approaches.

The IL cites the more detailed *Petroleum Industry Activity in Native Prairie and Parkland Areas: Guidelines for Minimizing Surface Disturbance*. That document discusses where native prairie and parkland are found, best practices for exploration activities, drilling and production, pipeline activities, and reclamation approaches and contains selected references and contact information. The guidelines were developed through the coordinated effort of the government agencies having jurisdiction over petroleum industry activities in the prairie and parkland areas of Alberta. Representatives were brought together to form the Native Prairie Guidelines Working Group, chaired by the EUB. Industry, government, and public industry stakeholders were invited to review a draft document and provide input before completion of the final version.

The EUB intends to continue its periodic review of *IL 2002-1* and the guidelines as improvements in approaches and best practices for petroleum industry activity on native prairie and parkland are made.

*IL 2002-1* is available on the EUB Web site at <[www.eub.gov.ab.ca](http://www.eub.gov.ab.ca)>. A link to the guidelines document is provided within the IL. For more information, contact Laura Roberts at the EUB, at (403) 297-7302. ❖

## Building Bridges for a Positive Future

The EUB is taking a proactive approach to opening the lines of communication with Aboriginal communities.

These efforts are the direct result of the Public Safety and Sour Gas Committee's consultation sessions with Aboriginal communities and subsequent recommendations. The Committee identified areas of concern to be communication, jurisdiction, and consultation. As a result of these findings, the EUB implemented a comprehensive Aboriginal culture awareness training program, with 25 staff from various business areas attending the initial two-day session at Nakoda Lodge September 2001. As of January 2002, all Field Surveillance and select Calgary office staff had completed their Aboriginal awareness training.

As part of the process of developing open communication, meetings and open houses have also been held throughout Alberta with numerous leaders of First Nations and Metis Settlements. These sessions are held to discuss the issues and questions of Aboriginal people in relation to oil and gas development in the province.

The EUB will continue to communicate with various Aboriginal bands to better understand some of their issues. The goal is to ensure that First Nations and Metis communities understand the roles and responsibilities of the EUB and Indian Oil

and Gas Canada (IOGC) in regard to resource development.

Additional field staff, including two Aboriginals, have been hired to implement the Public Safety and Sour Gas Committee recommendations. Staff in the EUB's seven field centres and two sub-offices are available to answer questions, supply information, and discuss concerns and questions about oil and gas development on First Nations and Metis lands.

Work is also being done to ensure that Aboriginal communities affected by oil and gas development receive timely and efficient service from the EUB, and that they understand the role the EUB plays in regulating Alberta's resources.

The EUB and IOGC are committed to maintaining open communication with First Nations. Open houses, meetings, and printed materials are being used to provide communities with the information necessary to alleviate issues and/or concerns regarding oil and gas development. The same is being done for Metis settlements.

The EUB will continue to promote trust, respect, and understanding with the Aboriginal people of Alberta.

For more information on Aboriginal relations and the EUB, contact Doreen Healy at (403) 242-5557 or Rob Barber at (780) 460-3817. ❖

### Questions, Complaints, Problems? Who to contact...

**Utilities**—For general information or to file a consumer utility complaint, please contact us at

EUB Utilities Branch, 10th floor, 10055-106 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2Y2  
 Telephone: (780) 427-4901, Fax: (780) 427-6970  
 Complaints: (780) 427-4903  
 E-mail: utilities.concerns@eub.gov.ab.ca

**Oil and Gas**—For information or complaints about new or existing oil and gas developments and facilities, we recommend contacting the operating company first. If the company doesn't respond appropriately, you may contact the nearest EUB field centre (see list), all of which provide 24-hour on-call service.

#### EUB Field Centres (24-hour on call)

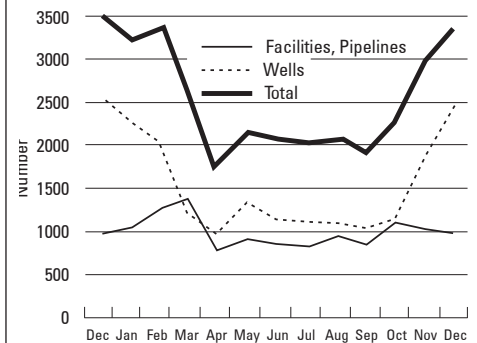
Bonnyville	(780) 826-5352*
Drayton Valley	(780) 542-5182*
Grande Prairie	(780) 538-5138*
Medicine Hat	(403) 527-3385*
Midnapore	(403) 297-8303*
Red Deer	(403) 340-5454*
St. Albert	(780) 460-3800*
Wainwright	(780) 842-7570*

\* To call toll free from anywhere in Alberta, dial 310-0000 and enter the 7-digit local number to connect, or press zero for a RITE operator.

## Application Summary

Facilities applications, 2001	Nov.	Dec.
Production facilities	144	167
Pipelines	873	763
Wells	1885	2437
Total received	2902	3367
Total completed/approved	2621	3401
Closed	9	1
Withdrawn	75	42

### Facilities applications, Dec. 2000 - Dec. 2001



Resource applications, 2001	Nov.	Dec.
Equity (rateable take, common carrier, common purchaser, common processor, compulsory pooling, special spacing)	53	43
Conservation (resources – oil, gas, and in situ bitumen; gas removal, enhanced recovery, water disposal, concurrent production, underground storage, commingled production, reserves)	130	79
Depletion administration (good production practice, penalty relief)	13	12
Corporate (transfer)	3	4
Mining (coal and mineable oil sands)	0	2
Total received	199	140
Total completed/approved	187	158

Utilities applications, 2001	Nov.	Dec.
Electric	54	50
Gas	4	3
Facilities	8	9
Franchises and others	50	42
Total received	116	104
Total completed/approved	26	238

Corporate transfers and name changes, 2001	Nov.	Dec.
Well licence transfers	280	593
Well licence name changes	199	122
Pipeline licence transfers	52	294
Facility licence transfers	6	6
Total received	537	1015
Total completed	443	1007

## Upcoming Public Hearings: Spring 2002

Due to space constraints, this is not a complete list of hearings scheduled, rather a snapshot of selected hearings. For a complete and accurate list of hearings scheduled, go to the EUB Web site and look under Applications. As well, some company names have been abbreviated. For information on hearings scheduled later in the year or not included on this list, call (403) 297-8259. Actual hearing durations may vary significantly. Unless otherwise noted, hearings begin at 9:00 a.m. and are open to the public. **If you are interested in attending one, please call the above number to reconfirm the date, time, and place.**

Scheduled Start Date	Application No.	Applicant	Hearing Purpose	Location
April 16	1253457	NOVA Chemicals Corporation, Industrial Gas Consumers Association of Alberta, Dow Chemicals Canada Inc. and Williams Energy Inc.	Enforcement of Tariff and Carbon Dioxide specifications for Nova Gas Transmission Ltd.	Calgary Place 1 11th Floor 330 - 5th Avenue SW, Calgary
Final Argument April 18 9:00 a.m.	1237639	ATCO Gas - South (a division of ATCO Gas and Pipelines Ltd.)	Carbon Storage Transfer	Strand/Tivoli Room, Metropolitan Centre 333 - 4th Avenue SW, Calgary
April 22	1243579	Big Island Energy Ltd.	Compulsory pooling – Three Hills Creek Field	West Hall, 2nd Floor, 640 - 5 Avenue, SW, Calgary
April 22 2:00 p.m.	1245440	Nova Gas Transmission Ltd.	Fort Saskatchewan pipeline extension - Scotford sales meter station, Josephburg sales meter station, Astotin sales meter station	Holiday Inn Downtown 119 - 12 Avenue SW, Calgary
April 22 1:30 p.m.	1248859	ESBI Alberta Ltd.	Consideration of transmission congestion management principles and recommendations	Calgary Place 1, 11 Floor, 330 - 5th Avenue SW, Calgary
May 14	1251218	ATCO Electric Ltd.	2001/2002 Distribution Tariff - 2002 Investment and Contribution Policy module	EUB's Utility Board Office 12 Floor, 10055 - 106th Street Edmonton
May 21	1079211	Fekete Associates Inc. on behalf of OMI Resources Ltd.	Reduced gas well spacing – Athabasca East Hills Field	West Hall, 2nd Floor, 640 - 5 Avenue, SW, Calgary
June 4	1254194	Husky Oil Operations	Compulsory Pooling Sakwatamau Field	West Hall, 2nd Floor, 640 - 5 Avenue, SW, Calgary
June 17	2000198	Glacier Power Ltd.	Dunvegan Hydroelectric Facility	Fairview College Fairview, Alberta
June 20	1247777	Centrica Canada Limited	Application to construct and operate a sweet gas pipeline – Bruderheim Area	Days Inn 1101 - 4 Street, Nisku
June 24	1250392	Utilicorp Networks Canada (Alberta) Ltd.	2002 - 2006 Distribution Tariff Application	June 24 - 28 Calgary Place1, 11 Floor, 330 - 5th Avenue SW, Calgary  July 2 - Aug 2 Govier Hall, 2nd Floor, 640 - 5 Avenue, SW, Calgary

## Pending Decisions

Application No.	Applicant	Hearing Purpose	Hearing Date(s)	Actual Hearing Days
1076136, 1084839, 1084841	Compton Petroleum Corporation	Applications for sour gas batteries, pipelines, and a well - Vulcan Field	January 22	2
1240343, 1240344, 1240345, 1240346	Penn West Petroleum Ltd.	Applications to construct salt water/fresh water/oil effluent pipelines and facility modifications – Pembina Field	March 13	2
2000231	Board Initiated Proceeding	Review of EUB Abandonment Costs Order No. ACO 2000 - 1. (Prince Resource Corporation and Richard Yu)	March 26	3
2000233, 2000234	ATCO Electric Ltd., ATCO Gas and Pipelines Ltd., Northwestern Utilities Limited	Affiliate transactions and code of conduct	September 17 Board response re: Generic Code of Conduct December 18	14
1248957	City of Airdrie	Application pursuant to s. 47 of the MGA for assistance in setting a price and conditions of sale of electric distribution system with the municipal boundaries from UNCA	Reply by February 8	Written Proceeding
1252145	ATCO Electric Ltd.	Adjustments to the transmission and distribution revenue requirements for changes in the booked deferred taxes from the place-holders incorporated into the 2001 - 02 transmission and distribution negotiated settlements	Written reply by February 19	Written Proceeding
2000135	ESBI Alberta Ltd.	EAL 2001 GTA Phase II (PPA Buyer Related Issues)	Reply by February 22	8

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