



April 27, 2009

Legislative amendments facilitate regional plans

Edmonton... The proposed amendments ensure that existing Acts align to support regional plans and ensure compliance with these plans. For some legislation, this requires more extensive changes. These Acts include the following.

Public Lands Act

- **Land management** amendments allow the government to make regulations for public access to public land. The amendments:
 - transfer Forest Land-Use Zones from the *Forests Act* to the *Public Lands Act* and enable the development of regulations to manage access to vacant public lands, bringing public land management across Alberta under one statute;
 - support the development of a strategy for managing recreational use of public lands as committed to in the Land-use Framework; and
 - provide for mitigation for loss of, or damage to, public land through new tools such as stop work orders or disposition suspensions, to protect and preserve the public land base.
- **Enforcement** amendments are in line with other provincial environmental statutes, and will allow the government to enforce the Act and regional plans where public lands are concerned. Examples include:
 - clarifying administrative penalty tools and processes, such as increasing the time period for investigations to two years and clarifying the ability of enforcement officers to enter and inspect public land and obtain records or evidence; and
 - increasing maximum fines for offences and distinguishing between individual and corporate offenders. For example, maximum fines will increase from \$5,000 to \$1 million for companies that knowingly commit an offence.
- **Appeals and dispute resolution** amendments give the government the ability to establish a process that gives companies or individuals the opportunity to resolve conflicts and ensures fairness in decision making.

Municipal Government Act

- **Compliance** amendments require that municipal plans and bylaws and the decisions that flow from these (by subdivision authorities, development authorities, municipal planning commissions and development appeal boards) are in conformance with regional plans.
- **Intermunicipal development plan** amendments allow the Minister of Municipal Affairs to require two or more municipal authorities to establish an intermunicipal development plan and to define the matters to be included in, and the timeline for completion of, the plan.

- **Minister's power** amendments allow the Minister of Municipal Affairs to exercise additional actions to ensure compliance if a municipality does not comply with regional plans.
- **Process amendments** require municipalities to determine whether public consultation is necessary in amending plans and bylaws to conform with a regional plan. If council determines that further consultation is not necessary, it may proceed without giving notice and holding a hearing.

Forests Act

- **Forest resource management** amendments provide clarity on the decisions that can be made with respect to timber dispositions and quotas in support of regional plans. Examples include:
 - acknowledgement of regional plans and their authority over forest plans and dispositions issued under the *Forests Act*;
 - the ability to divide existing allocations of timber according to planning regions;
 - designation of decision-making authority; and
 - addition and definition of terms for clarification
- **Enforcement** amendments will allow the government to enforce the Act and regional plans. Examples include:
 - clarifying administrative penalty tools and processes;
 - increasing maximum fines for offences and distinguishing between individual and corporate offenders; and
 - updating enforcement provisions and language.
- **Appeals** amendments give the government the authority to establish a process that gives companies or individuals the opportunity to resolve conflicts and ensures fairness in decision making.

Acts amended by the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* include the following:

*Administrative Penalties and Related Matters
Statutes Amendment Act 2002
Agricultural Operation Practices Act
Agricultural Pests Act
Alberta Utilities Commission Act
Coal Conservation Act
Electric Utilities Act
Energy Resources Conservation Act
Environmental Protection and Enhancement
Act
Forests Act
Highways Development and Protection Act
Historical Resources Act
Interpretation Act
Irrigation Districts Act*

*Mines and Minerals Act
Municipal Government Act
Natural Resources Conservation Board Act
Oil and Gas Conservation Act
Oil Sands Conservation Act
Pipeline Act
Post-secondary Learning Act
Provincial Parks Act
Public Highways Development Act
Public Lands Act
Water Act
Wilderness Areas, Ecological Reserves,
Natural Areas and Heritage Rangeland Act
Wildlife Act*

For additional information on each Act's consequential amendments visit www.assembly.gov.ab.ca

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