

# Bulletin 2024-04

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## Pilot for Reclaiming Peatlands

On December 14, 2023, Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (AEPA) released [\*Interim directive: pilot for reclaiming peatlands - decision framework and support tools for reclaiming well sites and access roads on public lands\*](#) (Land Policy, 2023, No.3), concerning a pilot for reclaiming peatlands and a new process for approving changes in land use dispositions.

Under the AEPA's current policy, the standard practice is to return oil and gas dispositions on public land to their predisturbance land use, which involves removing any imported materials from the site. In some cases, disposition holders can request that the land use remain in its current state and not be returned to its predisturbance use. If approved, AEPA issues an approval for the imported materials to remain in place and provides it to the AER as part of the reclamation certificate application package.

This pilot streamlines the reclamation process by transferring regulatory authority to the AER to approve requests for land use changes for oil and gas dispositions. Disposition holders requesting a land use change to allow imported material to remain in peatland must now contact the AER for approval. A qualified professional must request land use changes using the Petroleum Technology Alliance Canada's decision framework and decision support tools as follows:

- Certification of Mineral Soil Pads in the Boreal Region – Decision Framework and Support Tools: 2023 Update: <https://auprf.ptac.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Decision-Support-Tools-2023-Update.pdf>
- Site End Land Use Recommendation Calculator: [https://auprf.ptac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/PTAC-20-RRRC-05-Site-End-Land-Use-Recommendation-Calculator\\_FINAL.xlsx](https://auprf.ptac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/PTAC-20-RRRC-05-Site-End-Land-Use-Recommendation-Calculator_FINAL.xlsx)

The AER will accept submissions for the pilot program between February 1, 2024, and July 31, 2025. Requests can be submitted as a reclamation certificate variance through One Stop. These requests must be approved before submitting a reclamation certificate application.

The pilot only applies to oil and gas well sites and access roads on public land that are

- not associated with an Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act approval, and
- are entirely outside the boundary of a caribou range.

We remind disposition holders that participation in the pilot project does not guarantee approval of a request for land use change.

General questions about the pilot can be directed to [RecRemQuestions@aer.ca](mailto:RecRemQuestions@aer.ca) or our Customer Contact Centre by phone at 1-855-297-8311 or by email at [inquiries@aer.ca](mailto:inquiries@aer.ca).