

2026 ABAER 001

Proceeding 450

Canadian Natural Resources Limited

North Pit Extension Project

Decision

The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) hearing panel assigned to this proceeding, noting that Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation Association have withdrawn from the proceeding and do not object to approval of *Oil Sands Conservation Act* application 1909112, *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* application 012-00149968, *Water Act* applications 025-00201931 and 001-00413940, and *Public Lands Act* application MSL033406, finds that a hearing is no longer necessary and refers the applications to authorized AER staff to disposition.

Discussion

[1] On April 30, 2018, Canadian Natural Resources Limited applied for the following:

- Amendment of commercial scheme approval number 9752E, pursuant to section 13 of the *Oil Sands Conservation Act* for the recovery of bitumen and updates to tailings management
- Amendment of *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* (EPEA) approval number 00149968-01-00 for the construction, operation, and reclamation of the North Pit Extension Project, pursuant to sections 67(1) and 70(1) of *EPEA*
- Amendment of *Water Act* approval number 00201931-01-00, pursuant to section 42(1)(b) of the *Water Act*, to extend the current fenceline to accommodate dewatering and drainage activities, including the removal of wetlands associated with the North Pit Extension Project
- Approval for a new *Water Act* licence, pursuant to section 50(1) of the *Water Act*, for the diversion of groundwater and surface water within the extended *Water Act* fenceline boundary, including the unnamed Athabasca River tributaries and the catchment areas associated with the Calumet River, Tar River, and Pierre River
- Amendment to extend the mineral surface lease (MSL033406), pursuant to section 20 of the *Public Lands Act*, for surface rights to occupy the Crown lands associated with the extension of the North Pit and the overburden/interburden storage areas

[2] Canadian Natural is requesting regulatory approval of its North Pit Extension Project, which would be an extension of the previously approved Horizon Oil Sands Mine and Processing Plant. Horizon is in

the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, 70 kilometres north of Fort McMurray. If approved, the proposed project will be developed in portions of townships 96 and 97, ranges 11 and 12, west of the 4th meridian.

[3] In 2018, eight groups, including Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation Association and Fort McMurray 468 First Nation, filed statements of concern about the applications. In 2022, following a second public notice of application, seven groups, including Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation Association and Fort McMurray 468 First Nation, filed statements of concern about the updated applications.

[4] The AER referred the applications to hearing on October 3, 2024, and a notice of hearing was issued on February 4, 2025. The hearing panel granted hearing participation to Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation Association and Fort McMurray 468 First Nation on April 14, 2025.

[5] On September 2, 2025, Fort McMurray 468 First Nation withdrew its statements of concerns about the applications and withdrew from this proceeding.

[6] On October 24, 2025, the hearing panel advised Canadian Natural and Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation Association the hearing would start on February 24, 2026.

[7] On February 12 and 17, 2026, Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation Association filed correspondence indicating they withdrew from this proceeding and confirming they do not object to approval of the applications.

[8] Given the above, the hearing panel accepts Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation Association's withdrawal from this proceeding. In addition, because we have not identified any unresolved concerns that should be dealt with in a hearing, the public hearing is cancelled.

Dated in Calgary, Alberta, on February 19, 2026.

Alberta Energy Regulator

Cindy LF Chiasson, LLB
Presiding Hearing Commissioner