

BY E-MAIL ONLY

Calgary Head Office
Suite 1000, 250 – 5 Street SW
Calgary, Alberta T2P 0R4
Canada

March 27, 2019

www.aer.ca

Jim and Carol Hern

**RE: Canadian Natural Resources Limited (CNRL)
Application No. 432417 (the Application)
Statement of Concern No. 31398**

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hern:

You are receiving this letter because you filed a statement of concern in respect of the Application. The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) has reviewed your statement of concern, along with the Application, the applicable requirements, and other submissions or information about the Application. The AER has decided that a hearing is not required under an enactment, or necessary, to consider the concerns outlined in your statement of concern.

In its review of your concerns, the AER considered the following:

- A shallow gas well was drilled on the site using minimal disturbance practices.
- Salix Resource Management (Salix) conducted a detailed site assessment (DSA) on July 18, 2018. The DSA indicates that the conditions of the soil, landscape, and vegetation on the wellsite meet all parameters of the *2010 Reclamation Criteria for Wellsites and Associated Facilities for Native Grasslands* (the *Reclamation Criteria*).
- The wellsite and access trail are on a Special Areas grazing lease, which is administered by the Special Areas Board per the *Special Areas Act* and *Municipal Government Act*. The Special Areas Board land manager has established *Best Management Practices for Reclamation of Trails on Native Grassland within the Special Areas* (*Best Management Practices*). Based on the *Best Management Practices*, Salix concluded that further disturbance to the access trail would likely lead to wind and water erosion, and that the risk of additional erosion and the pre-existing nature of the access trail did not warrant any additional reclamation work.
- The Special Areas land manager supervises all grazing leases and associated wellsites within Special Areas and has not raised any concerns regarding the wellsite or access trail to date.
- The *Reclamation Criteria* are applied “to evaluate whether a site has met equivalent land capability.” The DSA indicates that the wellsite meets the *Reclamation Criteria*. Accordingly, the AER is satisfied that the wellsite has met equivalent land capability.
- Photographic and written evidence submitted by Salix indicates that the access trail existed prior to construction of the wellsite, and that the operator’s activities have not caused further impacts to the access trail. In addition, further disturbance to the access trail may have a negative ecological impact on the sensitive soils and native vegetation. As a result, the AER is satisfied that the access trail does not require additional reclamation and that your concerns have been adequately addressed.

The AER has issued the applied-for reclamation certificate and this is your notice of that decision. A copy of the reclamation certificate is enclosed.

You may file a regulatory appeal on the AER's decision to issue the reclamation certificate if you satisfy the elements within sections 36 and 38 of the *Responsible Energy Development Act*. Filing instructions and forms are on our website under Regulatory Appeal Process.

If you have any questions, contact Tracy Kupchenko by e-mail at tracy.kupchenko@aer.ca.

Sincerely,

<original signed by>:

Tania De Silva

Director, Oil, Gas & Pipeline, Closure & Liability

Enclosure (1): Reclamation Certificate

cc: Kayley Du Plessix, Canadian Natural Resources Limited,
Joel Conrad, Salix Resource Management,
Nolan Ball, Special Areas Agrologist,
AER SOC Coordinator,
AER Medicine Hat Field Centre,