



# Reclamation and Remediation

## Fact sheet

An essential part of the Alberta Energy Regulator's (AER) role as a full life-cycle regulator is overseeing the reclamation and remediation of energy developments—be they wells, pipelines, gas plants, coal mines, or oil sands mines.

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### Who regulates energy industry reclamation activities?

The AER regulates reclamation activities on both private and public land. A company that owns a well or pipeline that is no longer productive is responsible for reclaiming the land, addressing surface reclamation issues and subsurface contamination, and applying to the AER for a reclamation certificate. Once standards are met, the Alberta Energy Regulator issues a reclamation certificate.

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### What is reclamation?

Under the *Environmental Enhancement and Protection Act (EPEA)*, energy companies must do everything they can to return the land to a state functionally equivalent to what it was before the development took place. The time it takes to complete the reclamation can vary; regardless, the AER must be satisfied that all requirements have been met before certifying a site reclaimed.

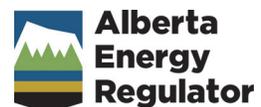
The upstream oil and gas reclamation and remediation program was developed in consultation with landowners, industry, and other affected stakeholders and ensures that land in Alberta used for oil and gas development is restored to a productive state.

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### When does reclamation take place?

Once an energy project has been properly closed and abandoned, reclamation and remediation of the site can begin. Under *EPEA*, companies are legally obligated to return the disturbed specified land to a state functionally equivalent to what it was before development; they remain responsible, in perpetuity, for any infrastructure left beneath the surface.

The Alberta Energy Regulator ensures the safe, efficient, orderly, and environmentally responsible development of hydrocarbon resources over their entire life cycle. This includes allocating and conserving water resources, managing public lands, and protecting the environment while providing economic benefits for all Albertans.



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## **How does the Alberta Energy Regulator ensure that sites are reclaimed properly?**

Operators have to clearly demonstrate that all site issues have been addressed. The AER audits a certain percentage of sites that receive reclamation certificates. Additionally, the AER will respond to all complaints regarding site reclamation. If a landowner is not satisfied that the land has been properly reclaimed, the individual can file a regulatory appeal.

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## **How can landowners get reclamation information about their property?**

The AER requires energy operators to share all materials submitted as part of their reclamation certificate application with landowners. The *Responsible Energy Development Act (REDA)* requires that the public be notified of all applications, including applications for reclamation certificates. *REDA* also provides that anyone who believes they may be directly or adversely affected by an application can file a statement of concern with the AER within the timelines stated in the notice. A notice of decision will also be provided to the landowner.

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## **Will the AER investigate if there are concerns about the status of a site?**

All complaints to the AER will be fully investigated. If concerns are substantiated, a reclamation certificate may be cancelled. To make a complaint regarding reclamation, contact the 24-hour environment and emergency response line at 1-800-222-6514.

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