



The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) is responsible for all aspects over the entire life cycle of an energy development, which includes allocating and conserving water. This responsibility is governed by the provincial *Water Act*. This fact sheet explains how the *Water Act* applies to the AER's regulation of energy development.

What is the *Water Act*?

Alberta's *Water Act* supports and promotes the allocation and conservation of water.

What responsibility does the AER have under the *Water Act*?

The AER has assumed responsibility for the *Water Act* in relation to energy development activities—including application processes for the use of water (licences) and for activities that affect water (approvals). The Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD) retains the responsibility for setting policy around the province's water resources and all other sectors, such as agriculture and forestry.

How is it determined how much water will be used?

Industry operators are required to specify the amount of water to be used based on a present and reasonable need. The AER will review the application and will ultimately set the allocation, along with appropriate conditions, should the licence be approved.

How does hydraulic fracturing affect the water supply and aquifers?

The AER requires that any hydraulic fracturing fluids used above the base of groundwater protection be nontoxic and that the operator reveal the contents of the fluids to the AER upon request. The AER also requires that the type and volume of all additives used in fracturing fluids be recorded. This information must be submitted to the AER.

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.



The AER's regulatory requirements are designed to prevent any hydraulic fracturing fluid from mixing or entering groundwater or surface water. These requirements include ensuring the use of steel casing and full cementing of the wellbore so that any fluid inside the casing cannot mix with water in the formations through which the well passes.

Will the AER be handling all *Water Act* approvals?

The AER has the authority over all energy resource activities, including approvals, licences, and codes of practice. The ESRD retains its *Water Act* authority over all other sectors and for related policy, regulation and legislation development, and the administration of priorities in the event of a shortage.

How will the AER ensure that the province's water supply is safe?

Companies that are allowed to develop Alberta's oil and gas resources must follow all rules, regulations, and requirements. If they don't, there are strong consequences. The AER's enforcement tools can include

- more frequent and detailed inspections,
 - more stringent planning requirements,
 - enforcement orders
 - shutting down operations
 - levying of administrative penalties, and
 - prosecution.
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Where can I find more information about the *Water Act* and applications in my area?

Visit the AER website, www.aer.ca, for more information about the *Water Act*. All applications and subsequent decisions made on applications are also posted on the AER website under the Applications & Notices tab.

You may also contact the Customer Contact Centre at 1-855-297-8311 for more information.
