

News Release

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Updated AER water use report shows companies are using less

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For immediate release

Calgary, Alberta (February 22, 2018)...An updated water use report shows that oil and gas companies are using less water and improving recycling to develop Alberta’s oil sands. In fact, mineable and in situ oil sands each recycled about 80 per cent of the water used in their operations in 2016. But for the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER), recycling is just one measure of [water use performance](#).

“Albertans depend on us to make sure that energy companies are using water responsibly,” said Jim Ellis, the AER’s president and CEO. “We believe that publicly reporting on water use holds companies accountable for their actions, encourages them to compare themselves against their peers, and motivates them to use water more efficiently.”

Ellis added that “sharing this information also helps us inform Albertans about the steps companies are taking to innovate and invest in technology to reduce the amount of water they need to support their operations.”

Here are five things to know about the [Alberta Energy Industry Water Use Report](#):

1. **Show me the data.** The report has been updated and now includes data by company for oil sands [mining](#) and [in situ](#). Future updates to the report will include company data for hydraulic fracturing and enhanced oil recovery.
2. **One is not like the other.** Water use performance is more than examining which company uses the least amount and which company recycles the most. It’s also important to look at how each company operates (e.g. mining or in situ) and at the size and age of their projects because each factor affects their water use.
3. **Less is more.** Over time, companies have reduced the amount of water they need because of new technologies and innovation. In 2016, about 80 per cent of water used for oil sands mining was recycled from tailings ponds, while in situ recycled 86 per cent by separating and treating water from producing wells.

4. **A drop in the bucket.** While recycling plays a large role in the industry, companies can also find ways to use less water by improving their operations over time as we noted in our 2017 industry water use report.
5. **Performance matters.** The report is part of our [industry performance program](#), which measures, evaluates, and reports on energy development activities we regulate. Check out our [backgrounder](#) to learn more on how we measure water use performance.

The AER 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.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

A new water use report issued by the Alberta Energy Regulator shows that oil and gas companies are using less water and improving recycling to develop Alberta's oil sands. A full report is available on aer.ca.

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