

February 2004

## Overview

During the public consultations for *Water for Life: Alberta's Strategy for Sustainability*, Albertans expressed concern about the use of water – injected underground – to assist in oil recovery. Specifically, Albertans stated they are concerned that this use of water is a “permanent loss” of water that does not appear compatible with sustainable water management in the province. They also identified concerns that this use of water may reduce the amount of water available for other water users.

In response to these concerns, in September 2003, Alberta's Minister of Environment, Lorne Taylor, established the Advisory Committee on Water Use Practice and Policy to provide advice and recommendations on uses that remove water from the active water cycle.

## Role of Committee

The role of the Committee is to review current practices and policies, and identify potential options to reduce the amount of non-saline water that is used for underground injection purposes.

The Committee will then assess whether these options are practical (i.e. does the benefit of implementing an option merit the cost of making changes?).

The Committee will also provide guidance about long-term changes that may improve water conservation.

As part of its work, the Committee will consider:

### 1. Policy changes to reduce use of non-saline water for underground injection

There are currently several government policies that affect underground injection of water:

- Alberta Environment Groundwater Evaluation Guidelines (2003)
- *Alberta Water Act and Water (Ministerial) Regulation*
- *Alberta Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*
- Alberta Environment Policy for Groundwater Allocation For Oilfield Injection Purposes (1991)
- Energy and Utilities Board Guides 56, 23, 51 and 65
- Energy and Utilities Board Information Letter 89-5 (recycling of water)

### 2. Recommending changes to industrial practices to reduce use of non-saline water

- Improve recycling practices
- Increase use of saline groundwater
- Use of alternate substances to pressurize oil reservoirs (carbon dioxide; air)
- Use of alternate technologies to reduce water demand

### 3. Improving communication to companies practicing underground injection

- Information about best practices
- Information about feasibility of new technologies

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#### 4. Improving communication to stakeholders and public

- Improve information about the current situation and trends
- Information about the Committee's assessment and recommendations

#### 5. Improving research, data collection, storage and access

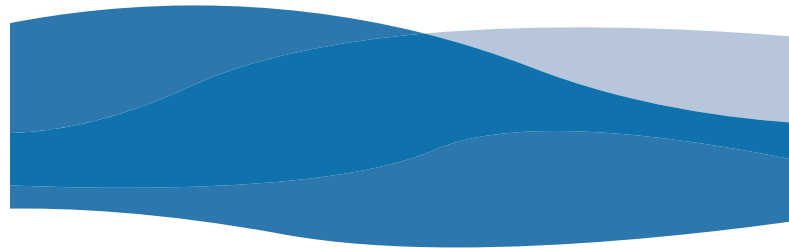
- Improve storage and data access
  - related to local complaints
  - related to water use by the oil and gas sector
- Improve evaluation of local groundwater effects of oilfield developments
- Research about alternate technologies for recovery of oil sands and heavy oil deposits
- Technology transfer (applying research knowledge to working projects)

More information on the Committee, its Terms of Reference and summaries of the meetings, are available online at [www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca](http://www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca)

#### Information

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#### Committee Members

Dave Trew (Chair)  
Alberta Environment

David Pryce (co-Chair)  
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers

Mary Griffiths (Dr.) (co-Chair)  
Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development

Jamie Wuite  
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

Bart Guyon  
Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties

Len Vogelaar  
Alberta Beef Producers

Linda White  
Alberta Energy

Bob Willard  
Alberta Energy and Utilities Board

Brenda Austin  
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Paul Weeks  
Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers

Wendy Lyka  
Canadian Chemical Producers Association

Craig Robertson  
Environmental Services Association of Alberta

Dean Lien  
Farmers' Advocate

Lee Arthur (Dr.)  
Public-at-large

Hank Van Beers  
Public-at-large

George Fink  
Small Explorers and Producers Association of Canada