

# Bulletin 2015-11

March 13, 2015

## ***Directive 074: Tailings Performance Criteria and Requirements for Oil Sands Mining Schemes Suspended***

This bulletin announces the suspension of *Directive 074: Tailings Performance Criteria and Requirements for Oil Sands Mining Schemes*.

On March 13, 2015, the Government of Alberta released the *Tailings Management Framework for Mineable Athabasca Oil Sands (TMF)*, which is effective immediately. The *TMF* is a new government policy that provides direction to the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) on regulating fluid tailings volumes and decreasing risks associated with the accumulation of fluid tailings on the landscape.

The AER is responsible for developing requirements that align with government policy and will work collaboratively with Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development to ensure that the AER's requirements support the *TMF* outcomes. The AER is currently conducting a detailed analysis of the *TMF* to fully understand its implications to existing requirements and determine the AER's regulatory and operational response.

Effective immediately, the AER has suspended the application and enforcement of *Directive 074* and all related approval conditions, including reporting requirements, while it reviews the *TMF*. The requirements in *Directive 074* and any associated approval conditions, including related reporting requirements, will not be enforced. All other AER requirements relating to the management of oil sands mine tailings, as well as numerous project-specific conditions that do not relate to tailings management, remain in place. Operators must also continue to meet all applicable requirements under the *Public Lands Act*, the *Oil Sands Conservation Act*, the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*, the *Water Act*, and the *Lower Athabasca Regional Plan*, as well as all pertinent federal requirements.

The AER expects all oil sands mine operators to continue to proactively manage fluid tailings volumes while it develops the requirements to implement the *TMF*, including establishing volumetric thresholds. The AER also expects operators, in the interim, to not make any material changes to their current tailings management programs that may be inconsistent with the *TMF*. The AER will be monitoring industry progress in managing tailings while it develops the new requirements.

The AER will provide information on how it will implement the *TMF* by April 10, 2015.

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If you have any questions about this bulletin, contact the AER's Customer Contact Centre at 1-855-297-8311 (toll free) or [inquiries@aer.ca](mailto:inquiries@ aer.ca).

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