

January 24, 2008

Alberta to cut projected emissions by 50 per cent under new climate change plan

Carbon capture and storage, energy conservation and efficiency, and greening energy production are keys to 200-megatonne reduction

Edmonton... Alberta will cut projected greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2050 as part of a long-term climate change plan that focuses on carbon capture and storage, consumer incentives and greener energy production.

“Alberta’s strong economy and beautiful wilderness areas contribute to our high quality of life,” said Premier Ed Stelmach. “Like others around the globe, we’re working to find the right balance between development and conservation. Our climate change plan ensures environmental protection while allowing for continued economic growth. It is practical and achievable. It encourages innovation, and sets realistic goals for industry.”

Experts agree carbon capture and storage holds great promise for Alberta. Research indicates new and next generation technologies will deliver the majority of the new plan’s reductions – about 70 per cent of the 200 megatonne-reduction by 2050. Up to \$500 million could be directed towards these initiatives, including allocations through the Canada ecoTrust and the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund.

Carbon capture and storage

Alberta will strike a government-industry council to determine a go-forward plan for implementing technologies, which will significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions by capturing air emissions from industrial sources and locking them permanently underground in deep rock formations.

The council will develop a made-in-Alberta plan for carbon capture and storage. It will respond to a federal-provincial task force report on carbon capture and storage and will deliver a strategy for implementing the technology that will include consultations with industry.

“Leading Canadian experts, economists and policy analysts support carbon capture and storage as the most promising means of reducing our greenhouse gas emissions,” said Environment Minister Rob Renner. “Alberta has three Nobel Prize-winning scientists already working in this area, which shows we have the capacity to be a world leader.”

Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology added, “This technology will dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions from oil sands production. This will help us continue to green our growth in that sector.”

Conservation and energy efficiency

About 12 per cent of Alberta's reductions will be achieved through conservation and energy efficiency. Offering consumer incentives to become more energy efficient is a key action under this theme. A detailed implementation plan will be completed this spring.

"Albertans have told us they want to do their part in reducing emissions," said Energy Minister Mel Knight. "Through the development of conservation and energy efficiency programs, we will invest in ways to inform and support Albertans in becoming more energy efficient."

Greening energy production

The plan calls for increased investment in clean energy technologies and incentives for expanding the use of renewable and alternative energy sources such as bioenergy, wind, solar power, hydrogen and geothermal energy. Initiatives under this theme will account for 18 per cent of Alberta's reductions. A detailed implementation plan will be developed and released this spring.

"With this plan, Alberta will achieve real reductions within a realistic timeline," said Renner. "Alberta did its research before setting reduction targets, then put a solid plan in place to achieve them. Cutting our greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent by 2050, will result in real reductions of 14 per cent below 2005 levels."

Addressing climate change is part of Premier Stelmach's plan to secure Alberta's future by building communities, greening our growth and creating opportunity.

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Backgrounder: Climate change plan overview and Alberta's record.

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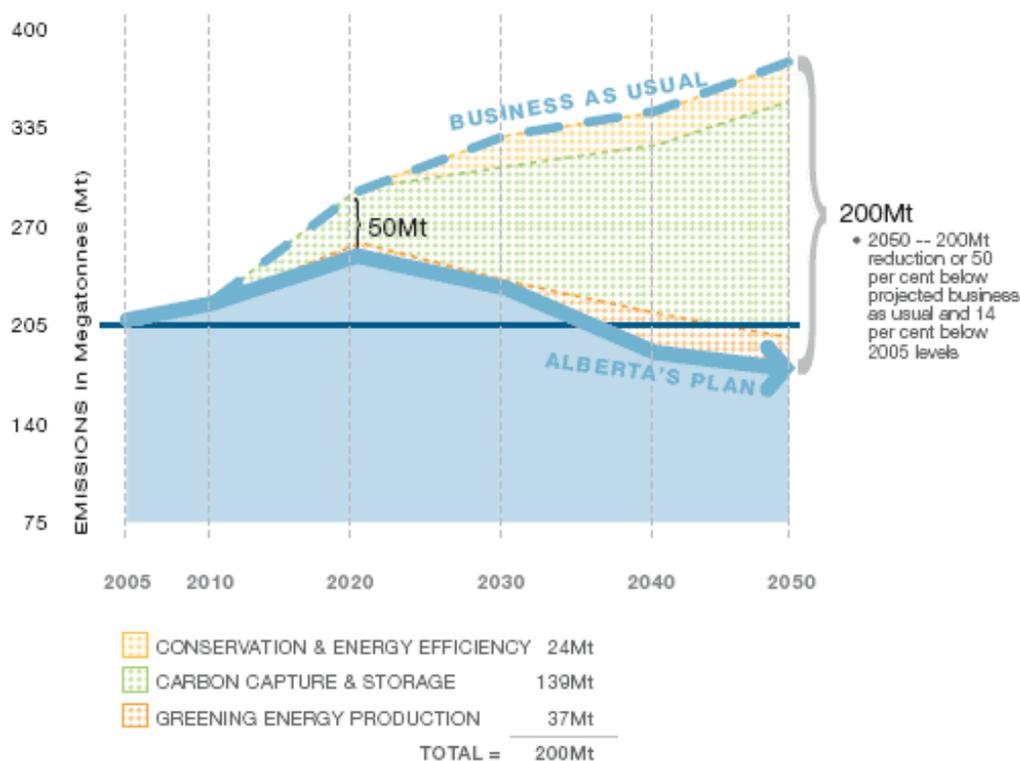
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Highlights of Alberta's new climate change action plan

Alberta is in a unique position as a global energy supplier. Our economy is growing, so our greenhouse gas emissions will rise over the short term. But as new industrial technology comes on stream, our emissions will drop. Alberta's emissions are projected to grow to 400 million tonnes by 2050, largely due to forecast growth in the oil sands sector. Alberta's new plan will cut the 400 million tonnes in half by 2050, with much of the reduction coming from oil sands activities.

ALBERTA'S REDUCTION COMMITMENTS



Alberta's climate change plan is based on three key areas: carbon capture and storage, energy conservation and efficiency, and greening energy production.

Carbon capture and storage technology

Alberta is the first in North America to direct dedicated funding to implement carbon capture and storage across industrial sectors.

- The technology will be responsible for 70 per cent of our emissions reductions by 2050 – the bulk of those reductions will come from activities related to oil sands production.
- A government-industry council will provide a made-in-Alberta blueprint for the immediate advancement of carbon capture and storage technology.

- The plan includes enhanced support for ongoing research and monitoring of carbon capture and storage projects.
- In-situ oil sands facilities that want to use heavier fuels for steam generation will have to incorporate carbon capture and storage into their building plans.

Energy efficiency and consumer incentives

- Alberta will provide incentives for energy efficiency to help Albertans reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Details on incentive programs will be announced at a later date.
- Government will develop energy efficiency standards in building codes for homes and commercial buildings.
- The plan includes support for municipalities and other groups in finding ways to reduce emissions, including land use planning.
- Strategies to help the agricultural and forestry sectors to reduce emissions will also be implemented.

Greening energy production

- The updated plan includes increased investment in clean energy technology. For example:
 - Funding projects that will help reduce the cost of separating carbon dioxide from other emissions in order to support carbon capture and storage.
 - Supporting research on new oil sands extraction processes that use less energy, less water and reduce tailing ponds.
- A focus on testing and implementing new clean energy technologies will be included in the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund.

Alberta's record

- Created Climate Change Central, a public-private partnership, helping Albertans cut emissions (1999)
- First in Canada with a comprehensive climate change action plan (2002)
- Provided more than \$30 million in interest-free loans for 60 projects to increase energy efficiency in municipal buildings (2003-2006)
- First in Canada to require large industry to report greenhouse gas emissions (2004)
- Helped Albertans replace more than 5,700 old furnaces with energy efficient models, cutting greenhouse gas emissions by 90,000 tonnes (2004/2005)
- Ninety per cent of electricity to power government-owned buildings comes from green sources (2005)
- Helped nearly 14,000 Albertans switch to Energy Star qualified clothes washers (2005/2006)
- Held comprehensive consultations with public, stakeholders and experts to gather input for new climate change plan (2007)
- First in North America to legislate mandatory greenhouse gas emissions reductions across sectors (2007)
- First in Canada to institute an emissions levy with the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund (2007)
- New government division established to focus on protecting the environment during oil sands development (2007)
- Address growth by setting new regional environmental limits for the Industrial Heartland, including limits on greenhouse gas emissions (2007)

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