

December 14, 2020

Implementing the Water Conservation Policy for Upstream Oil and Gas Operations

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) released the [Water Conservation Policy for Upstream Oil and Gas Operations](#) (WCP), replacing the [Water Conservation and Allocation Policy for Oilfield Injection](#) (2006). The WCP provides direction on water use and emphasizes the use of alternative water sources, including alternative non-saline water over high-quality non-saline water. This will reduce reliance on high-quality, non-saline water now and into the future. The WCP applies to the following energy subsectors:

- ◆ oil sands thermal in situ operations,
- ◆ enhanced oil recovery and cold bitumen enhanced recovery operations,
- ◆ multistage hydraulic fracturing in horizontal wells, and
- ◆ oil sand mining operations.

The [Alberta Energy Regulator](#) (AER) is currently developing the guidance to implement the WCP for the first three subsectors listed above, which will be released in early 2021. There are no changes planned for oil sands mining operations, which will continue to follow the [Surface Water Quantity Management Framework for the Lower Athabasca River](#) and the [Tailings Management Framework for the Mineable Athabasca Oil Sands](#).

The AER has released [Bulletin 2020-25](#), which provides further information on WCP.

For questions about the WCP, contact Steve Wallace at AEP by email to Steve.Wallace@gov.ab.ca.

For WCP-related questions on water licence applications, email EPEA.WA.Applications@aer.ca.

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