

**Ministry of Environment
and the
Environmental Assessment Office**

**2014/15 – 2016/17
SERVICE PLAN**

February 2014



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Message from the Minister and Accountability Statement



I am pleased to present the *2014/15 – 2016/17 Service Plan* for the Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office.

The [BC Jobs Plan](#) continues to guide British Columbia in the face of a fragile global economy. B.C. has tremendous opportunities to leverage our abundant natural resources while maintaining our commitment to environmental protection. As the Minister of Environment, I am committed to having the best strategies in place to minimize and mitigate environmental impacts so economic development proceeds in an environmentally sound manner.

B.C. has an unprecedented opportunity to create economic growth through the development of a new liquefied natural gas industry. I want to ensure liquefied natural gas development is done responsibly in B.C., so we are looking at new measures to protect air quality and manage greenhouse gas emissions. The Kitimat airshed study, which will be completed in the spring, is just one example of how we are working to understand the potential impacts from industry on air quality. In addition, three new air quality monitoring stations have been installed in northeastern B.C.

Since 2012, the Province has made it clear that B.C. will only consider support for heavy oil pipelines if five conditions are satisfied. In December 2013, the Joint Review Panel report was released on the Northern Gateway pipeline proposal. While the proposed project is part of the way to meeting the first condition (successful completion of the environmental review process), there are four other conditions that need to be met before British Columbia will consider support for the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline, or any heavy oil pipeline. Two of those other conditions require the establishment of world-leading practices for land and marine oil spill prevention and response. Ministry staff continue to work with Alberta, the federal government, industry and stakeholders to develop industry-funded and world-class spill response systems in B.C. Specific to marine spill response, this past fall the Province released its [West Coast Spill Response Study](#). This study will inform the Province's continued work with federal partners.

Fresh water is one of B.C.'s most valuable natural resources, and that's why it is our intention to establish new water sustainability legislation in 2014. Since 2009, we have engaged widely with British Columbians, accepting over 5,500 written submissions from individual citizens, First Nations and stakeholder groups. This new act will position B.C. as a leader in water stewardship by addressing a number of current gaps, including the regulation of groundwater withdrawal, stream health protection and large scale water use.

B.C. is a world leader in climate action and that leadership was made evident in June 2013 when our annual carbon neutral government report showed the provincial public sector achieved carbon neutrality for the third year in a row. B.C. became the first jurisdiction in the Pacific Coast Collaborative to put a price on carbon in 2008 with the ground-breaking revenue-neutral carbon tax, and California followed with a cap-and-trade system later that year. At our most recent meeting of the Collaborative, both Oregon and Washington states declared their intention to follow B.C.'s lead and

implement a form of carbon pricing. While government's commitment to climate leadership and a carbon-neutral public sector remains strong, so does its commitment to ensure our programs are operating as efficiently and effectively as possible. To that end, some functions of the Pacific Carbon Trust are being moved into the ministry to achieve approximately \$5.6 million in annual savings by 2015/16.

2013 was the busiest year ever for camping reservations in BC Parks, as a record-breaking 115,000 visitors made reservations through Discover Camping, the Province's camping reservation system. That broke the previous year's record of 100,000 reservations. B.C.'s magnificent parks and protected areas not only support the province's economy and vibrant tourism industry, they play a critical role in the protection and conservation of B.C.'s wildlife and habitats. In 2013, we protected more than 275,000 hectares by establishing 23 new parks, protected areas and conservancies. B.C. has the highest percentage of its land-base dedicated to protected areas of all provinces and one of the largest protected areas systems in North America.

As part of my mandate to review the Environmental Assessment Office, we will be working on a number of initiatives to ensure both economic development and environmental protection. These include looking at ways to shorten the environmental assessment process from beginning to end while providing greater certainty and transparency for proponents and participants. We will also work towards building stronger collaboration and capacity for environmental assessment across other government agencies while maintaining the integrity of the environmental assessment process.

A key element of environmental leadership is maintaining economic growth while promoting policies to encourage clean technology innovation and environmental sustainability. Through our Clean Energy Vehicle Initiative we've already installed 456 Level 2 electric vehicle charging stations around B.C. This past year as part of a concerted collections effort to increase court fine payment, we released *Closing the Gap*, a report which named all individuals and companies with overdue environmental court fines. And last year, the ministry sought feedback on the report *Protecting Vulnerable Species: A Draft Five-Year Plan for Species at Risk in British Columbia*. A considerable amount of feedback has been received and incorporated and I look forward to implementing key elements of the plan this year.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the Ministry's dedicated staff, and I'd like to thank them for their continued hard work.

The Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office 2014/15 - 2016/17 Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared.



Honourable Mary Polak
Minister of Environment
February 4, 2014

Table of Contents

Ministry of Environment

Purpose of the Ministry	6
Strategic Context	7
Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures	10
Resource Summary	27
Ministry of Environment Resource Summary Table	27

Environmental Assessment Office

Purpose of the Office	29
Strategic Context	31
Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures	33
Resource Summary	39
Environmental Assessment Office Resource Summary Table	39
Appendix	40
Ministry of Environment Contact Information	40
Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information	42

Purpose of the Ministry

British Columbia's water, land, air, and plant and animal life are among the most abundant and diverse in all of Canada, and provide British Columbians with a plethora of valuable economic and social benefits. The Ministry of Environment is responsible for encouraging and maintaining the effective protection, management and conservation of B.C.'s water, land, air and living resources. It administers the province's parks and protected areas, and monitors and enforces compliance with environmental laws and regulations. It is also responsible for providing leadership to minimize the effects of climate change and ensuring that British Columbians and industry are prepared to adapt to the effects of a changing climate. The Ministry was created and is governed by the *Ministry of Environment Act*.

B.C.'s environment is a natural resource that is entrusted to every B.C. resident. To help British Columbians protect their water, land, and air, the Ministry has developed environmental reporting tools such as Environmental Reporting BC and the on-line searchable Environmental Violations Database. The Ministry also uses the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line to acquire important information from British Columbians on what they see happening in all parts of the province. The Ministry takes a leadership role in engaging with stakeholders, First Nations and industry in sharing the stewardship of our environment.

Monitoring, assessing and reporting on environmental conditions are critical services provided by the Ministry, and delivering those services requires extensive scientific data. The Ministry collects, stores, retrieves, analyzes and sets standards for environmental data, and makes key data available to the public as part of the government's *Open Data* initiative. The Ministry also undertakes, commissions and coordinates environmental studies.

Threats to the environment are inherently threats to public safety. Incidents such as oil spills can threaten habitats and drinking water and require rapid and diligent responses. To this end, the Ministry manages a comprehensive emergency response program in order to protect the welfare of the public from environmental emergencies and disasters. The Conservation Officer Service provides critical public safety services, human-wildlife conflict response, and natural resource sector compliance and enforcement to the citizens of B.C.

Through leadership, expertise and sound scientific practices, the Ministry provides the services and support necessary to enable government to meet its environmental goals while supporting positive economic outcomes for B.C. The successful delivery of key cross-government initiatives such as the *BC Jobs Plan* and the *Climate Action Plan* depend heavily on the knowledge and hands-on planning expertise of Ministry staff. The Ministry's services are delivered by staff across B.C. by way of a province-wide regional service delivery model.

Strategic Context

Minister's Mandate Letter and Core Review

All members of the B.C. Executive Council were provided letters from the Premier outlining their key responsibilities as part of their mandates. For the Ministry of Environment, this includes continuing B.C.'s leadership on climate action and supporting the Province's opportunity to develop the liquefied natural gas sector. Other Ministry-specific mandate objectives over the coming years include:

1. Balance the ministry budget in order to control spending and ensure an overall balanced budget for the Province of British Columbia;
2. Complete the marine and land-based heavy oil spill response studies for our government's five conditions for proposed heavy oil pipeline projects in B.C.;
3. Review the Environmental Assessment Office and ensure timelines are appropriate for both economic development and environmental protection objectives, making recommendations for improvement as necessary;
4. Review the Pacific Carbon Trust and provide options for reform;
5. Work with the Minister of Natural Gas Development and ensure liquefied natural gas operations in B.C. are the cleanest in the world;
6. Complete consultation on the modernization of the *Water Act* and introduce and pass legislation as committed in *Strong Economy, Secure Tomorrow*;
7. Consult with communities, First Nations and industry to potentially develop a provincially designated protected area in the Klappan (Sacred Headwaters);
8. Create a new roundtable of representatives from communities, industry, labour, First Nations and the environmental sector to provide guidelines on how to balance environmental protection with economic development;
9. Ensure all revenues from fishing licenses are provided to the Freshwater Fisheries Society for conservation purposes no later than 2015/16; and
10. Create an annual water use report for companies involved in hydraulic fracturing to ensure public awareness of the water conservation strategies being undertaken by upstream natural gas companies.

The Minister is also committed to fully supporting and participating in Core Review. This service plan illustrates the many ways in which the Ministry is supporting the *BC Jobs Plan* and the Province of British Columbia Strategic Plan.

Economic Forecast

The Economic Forecast Council expects B.C.'s real gross domestic product to grow by 2.3 per cent in 2014 and 2.7 per cent in 2015. Risks to B.C.'s economic outlook include the potential for further slowing of domestic activity, renewed weakness in the U.S. economy and slowing Asian demand. Additional risks include the ongoing sovereign debt situation in Europe and a fluctuating Canadian dollar.



Climate Change

The climate is warming. In its most recent report released in September 2013 the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change¹ stated warming is unequivocal, human influence on the climate system and continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and other changes. Within B.C. winter and summer temperatures have increased and the number of frost days has decreased since 1900. Further changes are projected as greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. The risks to B.C. associated with these changes are substantial.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for unavoidable climate change will help to minimize impacts within the province and globally. B.C. is reducing emissions through various policies such as the carbon tax. The extent to which other nations and jurisdictions are effective in reducing emissions will influence the extent of climate impacts. Many of B.C.'s key trading partners and neighboring jurisdictions are implementing actions, including Alberta, California, Washington, Oregon, China and other Asian countries. Reducing emissions, using and exporting clean technologies and low-carbon fuels and developing an innovative clean energy sector all demonstrate climate leadership on an international scale.

In 2013, B.C. placed a five year freeze on the carbon tax to allow other jurisdictions to catch up to B.C.'s leadership position. This was made possible by the Province's considerable progress on climate change initiatives and ensures B.C. industries are not placed at a competitive disadvantage for playing their part in addressing climate change.

Population Growth

The population of B.C. is expected to increase by up to 1.4 million people by the year 2035. As the population increases, environmental pressures around the province will increase accordingly. Population increases result in higher levels of transportation activities, increased pressure on waste management systems, increased potential for human-wildlife conflict and additional housing and industrial development. As industry grows, so do pressures on ecosystems resulting from changes to the land base, natural resources and species.

¹ A scientific intergovernmental panel that assesses scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to the understanding of climate change.

Resource Management Coordination

Under the direction of the Natural Resource Board, natural resource ministries have adopted a sector approach which promotes streamlined authorization processes and enhanced access to public services across the province. This facilitates more consistent engagement and consultation with industry, stakeholders, partners and clients. It also enhances inclusion of Aboriginal, economic and environmental considerations into decision making. The ministries are working together to make these improvements and meet the commitments of the *BC Jobs Plan*.



Kayaking near Lowe Inlet Marine Provincial Park

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

The following sections provide an overview of the Ministry's key goals and their supporting objectives, strategies and performance measures.

Goal 1: Effective action on climate change

Objective 1.1: Reduced provincial greenhouse emissions

Climate change has global, regional and local significance. Changes in climate drive changes in natural systems that affect economic, environmental and social interests. The current rapid rate of change is of serious concern and is linked to the burning of fossil fuels and other human activities that release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Population growth is also contributing to the impact. How we respond to climate change will shape our economy, the environment, our society, our communities and our way of life.

The government has made a strong commitment to tackle climate change by addressing its causes (mitigation) and preparing the province for the unavoidable consequences of climate change (adaptation). The Ministry leads the government's cross-ministry climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- providing emissions inventory at the provincial, community and industrial level to assist British Columbians in better understanding their greenhouse gas emissions and informing them of strategies to reduce them;
- advising Government and reporting to British Columbians on B.C.'s progress in delivering on the commitments in the *Climate Action Plan* and the expected results in reaching B.C.'s greenhouse gas reduction targets;
- driving government leadership on climate action by leading B.C.'s Carbon Neutral Government commitment and supporting local governments in meeting their own commitments, including working towards carbon neutrality, under the Climate Action Charter; and



- proposing policies and programs across government to reduce emissions, including carbon pricing, regulatory measures and incentives.

Performance Measure 1: Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

Performance Measure	2007/08 Baseline	2011/12 Actual ²	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Annual level of greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia relative to 2007 levels ¹	66 megatonnes	62.2 megatonnes	18% reduction by 2016 (54.1 megatonnes)	18% reduction by 2016 (54.1 megatonnes)	18% reduction by 2016 (54.1 megatonnes)

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report

¹ Greenhouse gases are measured in units of tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. See the *British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report 2010*, page 15, for details at env.gov.bc.ca/cas/mitigation/ghg_inventory/index.html. Emissions estimates for 2007 can be expected to differ slightly with the release of each inventory report due to refined calculation methods.

² The most recent available data is for the 2011/12 year. Emissions levels are reported annually with a two-year delay. Data for 2012/13 will be available in 2014, and data for 2013/14 will be available in 2015.

Discussion

The *Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act* established B.C.'s target of reducing annual greenhouse gas emissions by at least 33 per cent below 2007 levels by 2020, and by at least 80 per cent below 2007 levels by 2050. An interim target of 6 per cent below 2007 levels was set for 2012, and a further interim target of 18 per cent below 2007 levels was set for 2016.

The data for this performance measure are taken from the *British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report*.² They are updated annually with a two-year delay. Estimates for 2012 will be published in 2014 and estimates for 2013 will be published in 2015. In 2011, the latest year for which data are available, total greenhouse gas emissions in British Columbia were 62.2 megatonnes carbon dioxide equivalent, a decrease of 5.7 per cent from 2007 levels.

The act also requires the Minister to prepare reports in even-numbered years establishing actual greenhouse gas emissions and progress against the targets, as well as the actions taken and plans for further initiatives. In 2012, the Ministry published [Making Progress on B.C.'s Climate Action Plan](#)³ to satisfy these reporting requirements.

Objective 1.2: Effective management of the risks associated with a changing climate

The greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere will continue to influence the global climate for decades to come and adverse impacts to the environment and human health are anticipated. A comprehensive climate change action plan therefore includes the development and implementation of plans to manage the risks associated with a changing climate. Effective preparation, or "adaptation,"

² env.gov.bc.ca/cas/mitigation/ghg_inventory/index.html

³ env.gov.bc.ca/cas/pdfs/2012-Progress-to-Targets.pdf

will help maximize the opportunities and reduce the risks related to climate change and its impacts on society and the natural environment.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- working across government to integrate climate change adaptation into government business;
- working with partners such as the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium to develop tools to support B.C. decision makers in preparing for anticipated impacts of climate change; and
- investigating options to accelerate adaptation efforts across B.C., including financial mechanisms and regulatory options.

Performance Measure 2: Review B.C. Government policies, strategies and operational activities to ensure they will deliver the desired objectives for their sectors in a changing climate

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target ²	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Completion of sector based policy, strategy or operational reviews for climate sensitive business areas. ¹	2	4	4	5	6

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled

¹ See the B.C. Forest Stewardship Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation at www.for.gov.bc.ca/het/climate/actionplan/index.htm and the BC Agriculture Climate Change Adaptation Risk + Opportunity Assessment at pics.uvic.ca/research-pages/affiliated-projects/bc-agriculture-climate-change-adaptation-risk-and-opportunity.

² Targets are cumulative.

Discussion

Government's adaptation strategy recognizes the importance of working with stakeholders in climate sensitive sectors, such as natural resources, health care, agriculture, tourism and transportation, to assess risk and prioritize actions to reduce the risk of adverse impacts to the sector from climate change. This performance measure assesses progress towards this commitment by tracking initiatives to review B.C. Government policies, strategies and operational activities to ensure they will deliver the desired objectives for their sectors in a changing climate.

Work has already begun. Government supported an industry-led effort to complete a climate change risk and opportunity assessment for the agriculture sector. The Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (FLNRO) developed an action plan for climate adaptation. Both were completed in 2012. Working with the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the Ministry completed a mining sector assessment in December 2013. Work is also underway on an assessment of coastal flood protection policy with FLNRO, Emergency Management BC and the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. The Ministry anticipates that one assessment will be initiated in 2014/2015 and that from 2015/2016 onwards one assessment will be completed each year. Sectors under consideration include transportation infrastructure, tourism and health care.

Information about *Preparing for Climate Change: British Columbia's Adaptation Strategy* is available at livesmartbc.ca/government/adaptation.html.

Objective 1.3: Promote innovative approaches to grow the Green Economy

B.C.'s leadership on climate change has sparked innovation across B.C.'s economy to develop business solutions to address environmental problems. By accelerating how we develop and demonstrate new clean energies and technologies here in B.C., our businesses have a strong foundation to export to a growing international market.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading cross-government efforts on the Green Economy elements of the *BC Jobs Plan*;
- working with large industrial emitters, such as liquefied natural gas exporters, to develop greenhouse gas management strategies to limit their carbon liability while providing new opportunities to reduce energy costs and access new markets;
- expanding the range of tools to attract investments in innovation such as offsets and government capital spending;
- working across government to promote demonstration projects that showcase B.C. clean energy and technologies as business solutions to environmental problems; and
- coordinating provincial relations with federal and international partners on climate actions to ensure coordinated and effective approaches for B.C. businesses, as well as developing new relationships with export markets.

Objective 1.4: Deliver a cost effective, diversified and strategic carbon offset portfolio

B.C. has implemented a number of innovative policies in the battle against climate change. The purchase of greenhouse gas offsets helps to reduce our carbon footprint and drive the growth of B.C.'s low-carbon economy. The purchase of carbon offsets is an important part of B.C.'s climate action plan.

Offsets are measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents. Because our atmosphere is like an ocean of gases, reducing carbon emissions at any location will benefit the whole system. Offsets are generated from changes made to avoid or absorb greenhouse gases. There are six major greenhouse gases: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulphur hexafluoride. A carbon offset represents a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that can be used to compensate for, or offset, emissions for other sources.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- competitively negotiating purchases while ensuring offset compliance and a diversity of environmental, social and economic benefits;
- monitoring and maintaining an appropriate level of risk in the portfolio of offset projects;
- implementing mechanisms that support the growth of B.C.-based clean technologies; and
- managing a portfolio of offset projects that are sourced from industries across the province.

Goal 2: Clean and safe water, land and air

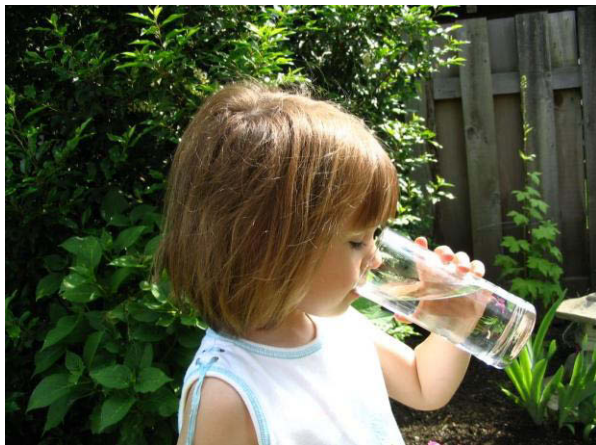
Objective 2.1: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our water resources

A safe and sustainable supply of high-quality water is vital to our communities, economy and environment. This can be achieved through effective legislation, innovative approaches to water governance and coordinated water management.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- engaging with First Nations, stakeholders and the public to develop new water sustainability legislation to protect stream health and aquatic environments, improve water governance arrangements, introduce more flexibility and efficiency in the water allocation system, and regulate groundwater use in priority areas and for large withdrawals;
- encouraging shared water stewardship by leading and coordinating the implementation of the actions and commitments in *Living Water Smart: British Columbia's Water Plan* (LivingWaterSmart.ca);



A safe and sustainable supply of high-quality water is vital

- working with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the ministries of Health and Agriculture, the Environmental Assessment Office and the Oil and Gas Commission to protect surface and groundwater resources;
- assessing the health of surface and groundwater resources through collaborative science and monitoring programs; and
- actively contributing to the Council of the Federation's Water Stewardship Council and engaging other governments and external stakeholders in implementing the [Water Charter](#).

Performance Measure 3: Water quality trends monitored under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement

Performance Measure	2006/07 Baseline	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percentage of water bodies monitored under the Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement with stable or improving water quality trends	96%	96.1%	96% or greater	96% or greater	96% or greater

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, Federal-Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network

Discussion

Under the *Canada – B.C. Water Quality Monitoring Agreement*, 28 provincially significant rivers and streams, including the Fraser, Columbia and Peace, are monitored in B.C. This performance measure relies on data collected from 37 monitoring stations to determine whether water quality is stable or improving in each of these key water bodies. The annual target of 96 per cent reflects a benchmark that is intended to be practical while remaining protective of water bodies.

By measuring the concentration of variables, such as metals, nutrients, pH, temperature and dissolved oxygen, the Ministry is able to identify trends in overall water quality. The results of this measure provide a good indication of the outcomes of water protection efforts and stewardship of the province’s water resources. In addition, the information helps inform authorizations for water use and helps establish further water monitoring requirements.

The Federal-Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Group has been working on a statistical power evaluation of the stations to determine the optimum sampling frequency. This project will allow the group to assess the efficiency of the current sampling program, including a minimum level of redundancy, and facilitate the establishment of new stations with reduced costs. The statistical tools developed through this program can be used by other monitoring networks.

In addition to the development of new statistical tools, a new station will be established in the Quesnel River to assess the cumulative impacts of upstream mining activities. This station will be a cost-shared station established in partnership with the Environmental Protection office in Williams Lake with support from mining companies.

The Federal-Provincial Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program continues to monitor Osoyoos Lake and the Fraser River Estuary using water quality monitoring buoys. This data is posted in near-real-time on the internet. Furthermore, data collected from the Federal-Provincial Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program are used in a variety of reports. One example is the annual report of the Canadian Environmental Sustainability Indicators program on the *Water Quality Index*⁴ developed by the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment.

⁴ ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=En&n=68DE8F72-1

Objective 2.2: Reduced contamination from toxins and waste

By reducing contamination from toxins and wastes efficiently and effectively, the Ministry will enhance human and environmental health and mitigate impacts to water, land and air.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with industry to develop, implement and continuously improve industry-led product stewardship programs;⁵
- regulating the management of waste and remediation of contaminated sites in order to protect human and environmental health and facilitate economic development; and
- collaborating with industry, communities, public organizations and other agencies to protect human health and the environment by promoting the safe use of hazardous products.

Objective 2.3: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our air

By encouraging the use of clean technologies and supporting the establishment of effective emissions standards, the Ministry strives to encourage environmental sustainability and reduce the impacts of air pollution on human health. Reducing emissions of some pollutants has benefits for both air quality and climate change. Emission reduction actions, cleaner technology and shifts in behaviour have all contributed to downward trends in pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and fine particulate matter over the past decade.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- leading the implementation of policies and initiatives designed to avoid, minimize and offset contaminant emissions from industry, transportation and urban growth;
- continuing to develop new industrial air emissions standards using best achievable technology practices;
- developing ambient air quality objectives, standards, guidelines and other resources to support airshed planning and decision making in permitting and environmental assessment processes;
- collaborating with the federal and provincial governments to develop a national air quality management system that will include national emission standards, national ambient air quality standards and be delivered through an air zone management approach; and
- collaborating with the Oil and Gas Commission, the Ministry of Energy and Mines, the Ministry of Natural Gas Development and local partners in the northeast to monitor, report out to the public, assess and reduce impacts of oil and gas development on air quality.

⁵ As per the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility (cme.ca/assets/pdf/epr_cap.pdf)

Performance Measure 4: Clean air standards for industry

Performance Measure	2008/09 Baseline	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Number of air emission standards incorporating current best achievable technology practices	3	8	9	10	11

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, corresponding policy, guideline, code of practice, or regulation
 Note: Targets are cumulative.

Discussion

The use of best achievable technology encourages new and expanding industries to use the cleanest available practices and technologies. The standards for air emissions are set through guidelines, policies, codes of practice and regulations, and support the government’s goal to protect air quality and human health. Standards for the slaughter and poultry processing industries, biomass-fired electrical power generation, wood-burning boilers used in agricultural operations, pellet plant manufacturing operations and wood residue burners have been developed over the past several years.⁶

To ensure continual progress is made to better regulate industrial waste discharges, the Ministry is committed to developing at least one new air standard per year that incorporates best achievable technologies. The development of such standards is complex as it may involve modification of the industrial process and/or application of control technology to minimize releases to the environment, while ensuring economic viability is maintained.

Objective 2.4: Effective management of environmental risks

As mentioned in the Minister’s mandate letter, the Ministry will be completing the marine and land-based heavy oil spill response studies for the Province’s five conditions for proposed heavy oil pipeline projects in B.C.



World-leading land-based and marine-based oil spill response is one of B.C.’s five conditions for proposed heavy oil pipelines

Events such as spills and catastrophic fires can present risks to public health and safety, property and the environment. Although not all environmental risks are avoidable, effective management can help to minimize and offset the impact of these risks. The Ministry anticipates, responds to and manages the consequences of risks to the environment, as well as risks to public safety involving human wildlife conflict.

⁶ More information on industrial regulations and codes of practice is available at env.gov.bc.ca/epd/industrial/regs/.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing and implementing a world-class regime that ensures the prevention, preparation, response to and recovery from spills that affect human health and the environment;
- promoting stewardship with other provincial agencies, industry, First Nations, local government, federal government and other stakeholders to protect the public and the environment in the event of an emergency or disaster;
- implementing new compliance approaches that allow the Ministry to improve its response to environmental risks and provide increased public accountability;
- minimizing the creation of future contaminated sites and managing the remediation of high-risk contaminated sites;
- collaborating with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to manage the public safety risks of human-wildlife interactions; and
- conducting investigations into non-compliance with regulatory requirements designed to protect the environment, human health and public safety.

Goal 3: Healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems

Objective 3.1: Well-managed, integrated, open and accessible information on species and ecosystems

The collection, storage, management and open distribution of scientific information on species and ecosystems enables effective science and policy development, contributes to the understanding of the status of native species and ecosystems, and leads to greater certainty in land use decision making.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- developing data systems to support the acquisition and management of data and information, and providing open access to that information in support of science, policy development and shared stewardship;
- employing the [B.C. Species and Ecosystems Explorer](#)⁷ to make available information on species and ecosystems at risk, including their conservation status, associated threats and conservation priorities; and
- assessing the conservation status of plants, animals and ecosystems and related risks and threats throughout B.C., including parks and protected areas.

⁷ a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/

Objective 3.2: Conserved, maintained and enhanced native species and ecosystems

Many Ministry programs support the conservation of biodiversity and the maintenance and enhancement of native ecosystems to achieve a balance between the needs of wildlife and the needs of people. The Ministry encourages and supports the public and stakeholders to accept a greater role in environmental stewardship, and facilitates community initiatives to protect and restore native species and ecosystems.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- implementing applied science and research programs to support continued improvement in the conservation of species and ecosystem;
- providing leadership in overall program coordination for species at risk, including preparing and implementing recovery plans, legal listing and intergovernmental relations;
- supporting natural resource integrated decision making through the development of consistent approaches, tools and policies, such as implementing the environmental mitigation and offsetting policy and associated procedures;
- addressing invasive species by collaborating with partners on strategies, providing enforcement services under the *Wildlife Act*, and using a specialized Conservation Officer Service response team to respond to controlled alien species; and
- conducting investigations into non-compliance with regulatory requirements designed to protect native species and their habitat.



A moose in the waters of Dune Za Keyih Provincial Park and Protected Area

Performance Measure 5: Changes in the conservation status of native species

Performance Measure	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Changes in the conservation status of species	Data Not Available ¹	Net Improvement	Net Improvement	Net Improvement

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer and Conservation Data Centre Biotics Database

¹ Status assessments are conducted in late fall and winter each fiscal year once data from summer inventories have been collated and evaluated; as such, data is not available for a mid-year forecast.

Note: This measure reflects the net change in the conservation status of species in B.C.

Discussion

B.C. has one of the most diverse assemblages of species of any Canadian province. Changes in the status of native species of plants and animals in B.C. is an important indicator of whether or not the Ministry is meeting its objective to conserve, maintain and enhance native species and ecosystems. The United Nations established the years 2011–2020 as the UN Decade on Biodiversity. One component of this declaration is to “improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity.” The Ministry’s performance measure coincides with this declaration and will give insight into B.C’s contribution to the United Nation’s goal as the decade progresses.

The Conservation Data Centre conducts status rank assessments for a different subset of species and ecosystems annually and reports these at the end of each fiscal year. As such, assessments for the 2013/14 fiscal year will be complete and reported in the final quarterly reporting period.

This measure reflects the net change in the conservation status of species in B.C. Species status changes slowly and this measure may require time to respond to environmental change or management actions. The role of the Ministry is to establish effective management frameworks that facilitate shared stewardship of the province’s biodiversity. The trend in this measure reflects the work of the Ministry in the context of shared stewardship with other governments, First Nations, industry and others. Factors outside of B.C., such as those that affect the status of migratory birds, also influence the biodiversity within the province’s borders.

Objective 3.3: Protect and manage natural values in parks and protected areas

Parks and protected areas help to ensure the protection of native species and ecosystems, provide families with outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities and contribute to meeting our environmental, social and economic goals. B.C. has the third largest parks system in North America and largest provincial/territorial system in Canada protecting over 14 per cent of the province. Our world-class parks system provides a legacy for future generations.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- protecting, restoring and managing high-priority habitat and ecosystems including invasive species, forest health impacts, species at risk and landscape connectivity;

- collaborating with First Nations and communities in protected areas planning and management to ensure long-term protection of natural, historical, cultural and recreational assets;
- strengthening the role parks and protected areas play in climate change adaptation; and
- increasing and promoting partnerships to expand the opportunities and involvement in stewardship initiatives.

Goal 4: British Columbians share responsibility for the environment

Objective 4.1: British Columbians are engaged in environmental stewardship initiatives

The Ministry recognizes that in order for shared stewardship to be successful, it is necessary to engage citizens and work in partnership with First Nations, industry, communities, environmental groups and other government bodies.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- promoting the sharing of responsibility for protecting the environment, human health and public safety through initiatives such as Bear Smart and [Urban Ungulate](#)⁸ programs;
- continuing to work with stewardship organizations such as the Cowichan Valley Stream Association and the Prince George Air Improvement Roundtable;
- promoting outdoor activities to foster a connection to and an appreciation for the natural environment; and
- developing and supporting conversations with the public, non-profit groups, communities, First Nations, academia and industry on environmental policies such as climate change, water stewardship and waste management.

Objective 4.2: British Columbians are provided with the information they need to make sound environmental choices

In order to foster an environmentally conscious society, people must be informed about the relationship between their actions and their health, as well as how their actions affect the health of other people, species and ecosystems. As British Columbians continue to make the connection between their activities and environmental impacts, they are much more likely to make sound environmental choices and set a higher environmental standard for their actions and those of others.

⁸ env.gov.bc.ca/cos/info/wildlife_human_interaction/UrbanUngulates.html

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- recognizing, promoting and enhancing shared stewardship through communication, consultative processes and volunteer initiatives that engage stakeholders, clients and partners;
- enhancing and promoting shared stewardship through effective and timely communication of compliance actions; and
- informing the environmental choices of British Columbians through the use of online tools that provide information and scientific data on the state of environment, including [@LiveSmartBCca](#), [@EnvReportBC](#), [Environmental Reporting BC](#), [BCAirQuality.ca](#) and [LivingWaterSmart.ca](#).

Objective 4.3: Industry and client groups implement best environmental management practices

Sustainable environmental management practices not only protect the environment, they reduce costs through more efficient use of resources and energy, and lay the foundation for good corporate citizenship.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- continuing to work with industry to develop, implement and continuously improve industry-led product stewardship programs;⁹
- encouraging compliance by reporting the names of those in non-compliance with Ministry environmental standards and regulatory requirements in the [Quarterly Environmental Enforcement Summaries](#);¹⁰



- expanding the role of qualified professionals in supporting the Ministry's regulatory role;
- continuing to explore opportunities to reduce regulatory burden through changes to streamline authorization requirements and support economic development;
- encouraging other jurisdictions to follow our carbon initiatives in order to ensure B.C. industries are not placed at a competitive disadvantage for playing their part in addressing

⁹ As per the Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility ([cme.ca/assets/pdf/epr_cap.pdf](#)).

¹⁰ [env.gov.bc.ca/main/compliance-reporting/](#)

climate change; and

- continuing to provide leadership in reducing municipal solid waste disposal, including the diversion of organic waste.

Performance Measure 6: Completion of the *Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility*

Performance Measure	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percentage of product sub-categories ¹ in the <i>Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility</i> fully covered by industry-led recycling programs in British Columbia	68%	79%	84%	95%

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled

¹ The action plan places a number of products into different categories. The Ministry divides these categories into sub-categories. For example, one category is packaging, which the Ministry divides into two subcategories: beverage containers; and packaging and printed paper. Some product categories include a large number of products and require multiple industry-led stewardship programs in order to attain complete coverage.

Discussion

In October 2009, the Canadian Council of Ministers of Environment endorsed the [Canada-wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility](#).¹¹ Industry-led product stewardship requires producers (manufacturers, distributors and retailers) to be responsible for the life cycle management of their products, including collection and recycling. This places the responsibility for end-of-life product management on the producers and consumers of a product rather than on general taxpayers and local governments. B.C. is committed to the action plan and is the North American leader in developing producer responsibility programs, having more programs and covering more products than any other jurisdiction. The website recycling.gov.bc.ca has the complete list of products with industry-led stewardship programs in B.C.

The target for this measure is to have comprehensive coverage of the products in all subcategories by 2017/18.



Seven Sisters Provincial Park and Protected Area

¹¹ ccme.ca/assets/pdf/epr_cap.pdf

Performance Measure 7: Municipal solid waste disposal

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Per capita municipal solid waste disposal (kg per person)	New measure	550	500	500	450
Per cent of population covered by an organic waste disposal ban	New measure	3.3%	66%	66%	68%

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled

Discussion

Municipal solid waste includes waste from residential, commercial, institutional, demolition, land clearing and construction sources. The per capita disposal rate is an estimate of how many kilograms of municipal solid waste one person sends to a landfill or other disposal site in a given year. It does not include waste that is reused or recycled. The 2010 provincial municipal solid waste disposal rate was 587 kilograms per person.

Organic waste (e.g. food scraps) represents approximately thirty to forty per cent of all solid waste currently sent to landfills. Sixty-six per cent of British Columbians live in regional districts that already have, or are expected to have by 2015, a landfill ban on organic waste. Metro Vancouver plans to implement an organic waste ban beginning in 2015, and when it does, the province's population covered by an organic waste disposal ban will increase substantially.

B.C. has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in municipal solid waste reduction, including the diversion of organic waste. Through a clear and consistent system to measure and publicly report per capita waste disposal, information sharing and engagement with regional districts, the Ministry will facilitate reduced waste disposal across the province. This includes supporting disposal bans and other reduction and diversion initiatives for organic waste.

The target for this measure is to achieve a municipal solid waste disposal rate of 350 kilograms person, with seventy-five per cent of the population covered by an organic waste disposal ban, by 2019/20.

Goal 5: Sustainable use of British Columbia's environmental resources

Objective 5.1: Wise management of and continued benefits from the province's natural resources

B.C.'s natural resources sustain a full range of economic, community and ecosystem needs. The Ministry seeks to ensure that all British Columbians will continue to benefit from the wise and

prudent management of these natural resources, which are crucial to the health and sustainability of our environment.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- operating the hydrometric and air monitoring networks¹² to obtain information to support water and airshed management;
- acquiring, interpreting and openly sharing environmental science and information;
- supporting communities engaged in multi-stakeholder air and water management;
- fostering sustainable natural resource management through collaborative approaches with the public, non-profit groups, communities, First Nations, academia and industry; and
- protecting the province's natural resources from costly, damaging and fraudulent activities.

Objective 5.2: Optimize outdoor recreation and economic opportunities from B.C.'s parks

B.C.'s parks provide families and visitors with a variety of unique outdoor opportunities in the form of recreation, camping, marine and freshwater angling, hunting and wildlife viewing. Engaging in these activities promotes an appreciation of B.C.'s landscape, native species, ecosystems and the environment as a whole, while supporting economic opportunities.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- promoting sponsorships, partnerships and donation opportunities to enhance conservation and recreation opportunities in BC Parks;
- continuing to promote volunteering that engages British Columbians in conservation and recreation activities throughout BC Parks;
- working with partners both inside and outside government to implement strategies and programs that promote and deliver exceptional outdoor opportunities;
- working with Park Facility Operators and other partners to ensure effective and high quality park experiences for visitors; and
- optimizing stewardship and economic opportunities with First Nations, local communities, non-profit groups, private land owners and others.

¹² The B.C. hydrometric network is an environmental monitoring system that collects stream flow data from over 450 locations in B.C. The data are essential for hydroelectric power production, infrastructure, as well as for flood forecasting, agriculture and other purposes.

Performance Measure 8: Park visitation and visitor satisfaction

Performance Measure	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Number of recorded park visits	20.8 million	21.3 million	21.7 million	22.0 million
Park visitor satisfaction level	80%	Maintain or improve (from 80%) ¹	Maintain or improve (from 80%)	Maintain or improve (from 80%)

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, BC Parks Visitor Satisfaction Survey and Parks Attendance and Revenue System

¹ Based on 2010/11 baseline of 80% satisfaction.

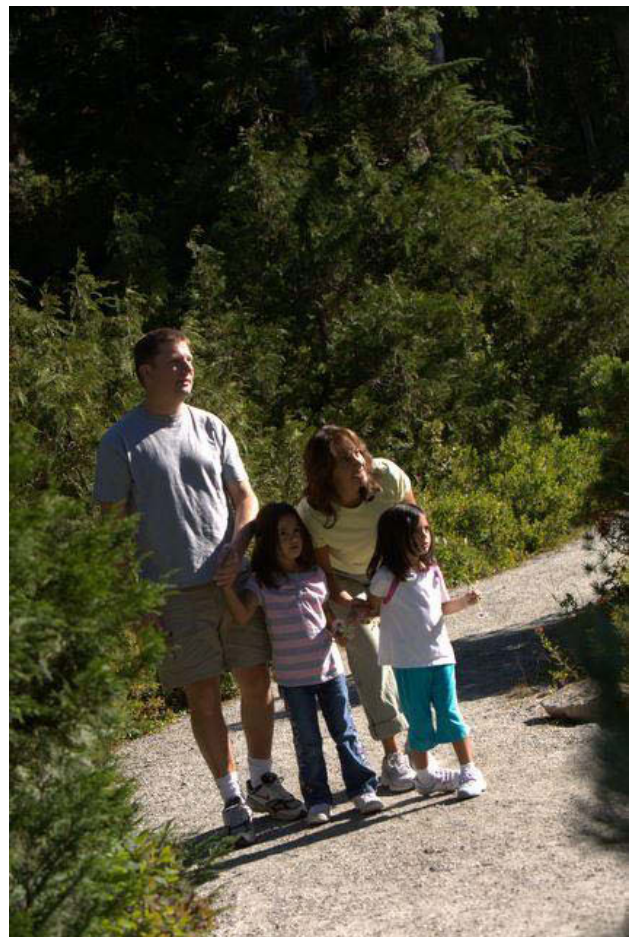
Note: The satisfaction rating is based on a satisfaction survey that is completed by users of campgrounds around the province. In 2013, over 2,400 people responded to the survey.

Discussion

The provincial parks and protected areas system in B.C. covers approximately 14 million hectares (or 14.4 per cent of the province). Provincial parks provide protection for representative landscapes and habitat for native species. Parks also provide recreational services and opportunities that contribute to local economies, promote active living and support an appreciation for the environment. In 2011, the Canadian Parks Council published an economic impact report stating that every dollar invested in B.C.’s protected areas system generates \$8.42 in spin off economic activity.

B.C.’s parks system is the single largest recreation enterprise in the province. The number of visitors to provincial parks is used to measure the contribution of parks to the government’s priorities of healthy communities, tourism and the economy. This performance measure is intended to provide a reasonable indication of the trend in the level of use of public outdoor recreation opportunities available in B.C.’s parks.

BC Parks continues to improve visitor services with a 27 per cent increase in capital funding for projects such as the new facilities at Liard River Hot Springs that showcase local First Nations culture. New designs for park furniture make more of B.C.’s parks accessible to all levels of ability and mobility. BC Parks is also exploring new recreational opportunities, like the Sea-to-sky Gondola project set to open May 2014.



B.C.’s parks provide families and visitors with a variety of outdoor opportunities

Resource Summary

Ministry of Environment	2013/14 Restated Estimates ⁽¹⁾	2014/15 Estimates	2015/16 Plan	2016/17 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Environmental Protection ⁽²⁾	8,324	9,288	8,688	8,324
Environmental Sustainability	19,083	19,083	19,083	19,083
BC Parks ⁽²⁾	31,422	31,751	31,751	31,422
Conservation Officer Services	16,714	16,714	16,714	16,714
Climate Action ⁽³⁾	3,271	3,271	10,271	10,271
Executive and Support Services ⁽⁴⁾	21,132	21,136	21,138	21,138
Sub-Total	99,946	101,243	107,645	106,952
Park Enhancement Fund special account ⁽⁵⁾	1,500	1,800	1,800	1,800
Sustainable Environment Fund	18,935	18,935	18,935	18,935
Total	120,381	121,978	128,380	127,687
Ministry Capital Expenditures (\$000)				
Executive and Support Services ⁽⁶⁾	18,227	18,633	18,633	18,633
Park Enhancement Fund special account	400	400	400	400
Total	18,627	19,033	19,033	19,033

Other Financing Transactions (\$000)				
Climate Action Purchase of Greenhouse Gas Emission Offsets for Inventory				
Receipts	0	0	0	0
Disbursements ⁽⁷⁾	0	10,000	10,000	10,000
Net Cash Requirements (Source)	0	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Receipts	0	0	0	0
Total Disbursements	0	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Net Cash Requirements (Source)	0	10,000	10,000	10,000

(1) For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2013/14 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2014/15 Estimates.

(2) Environmental Protection and BC Parks funding increases are to support the development and program demands of the liquefied natural gas industry.

(3) The \$7M 2015/16 increase in Climate Action is due to taking on the administration of greenhouse gas emissions offsets (previously Pacific Carbon Trust).

(4) Increase in Executive and Support Services is due to the Minister's Office budget lift from 2013/14 Estimates.

(5) The \$0.3M 2014/15 increase in the Park Enhancement Fund special account is offset by increased revenues.

(6) The \$0.406M capital increase in all years is allocated for vehicle purchases.

(7) The \$10M increase in disbursements is due to taking on the administration of greenhouse gas emissions offsets (previously Pacific Carbon Trust). The disbursements are used to purchase greenhouse gas emission offsets for inventory.

*Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Environmental Assessment Office

Purpose of the Office

The Environmental Assessment Office's vision is to support vibrant communities, a healthy environment and a prosperous economy. The Environmental Assessment Office ensures proposed major projects meet provincial environmental, economic and social goals, and the interests and concerns of B.C.'s families, businesses, communities and First Nations are considered in each assessment.

The Environmental Assessment Office evaluates proposed projects that are reviewable under the [Environmental Assessment Act](#)¹³ for potential adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage and health effects and verifies and enforces compliance with the conditions of environmental assessment certificates.

The Environmental Assessment Process

A broad range of proposed projects are reviewable if they meet or exceed thresholds defined in the *Reviewable Projects Regulation*¹⁴ for sectors such as mining, energy, waste disposal and transportation. The projects subject to review are generally those with a higher potential for adverse environmental, economic, social, heritage or health effects.

The Minister of Environment can also designate any project that has not been substantially started as reviewable if the Minister believes the project may have a significant adverse effect and an environmental assessment would be in the public interest. In addition, proponents may apply to the Environmental Assessment Office to request their project be accepted for review.¹⁵

An environmental assessment takes place in a number of stages. First, a proponent contacts the Environmental Assessment Office to either determine whether a proposal needs to be reviewed or to request that a proposed project be reviewed. The Environmental Assessment Office then issues an order as the first official indication a project will be undergoing an assessment. The project can only be built with an environmental assessment certificate.

In the next stage, the Environmental Assessment Office determines which components of a project will be included in the assessment and how the assessment will be done, including identifying those matters that will be considered and the need for public and First Nations consultation.

This is followed by the development of the application information requirements. This document identifies the information required in the application for an environmental assessment certificate and

¹³ http://www.B.C.laws.ca/EPLibraries/B.C.laws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_02043_01

¹⁴ For example, if a proposed coal mine is projected to produce $\geq 250,000$ tonnes of coal per year, it would be automatically reviewable.

¹⁵ A proponent may request (or "opt-in") that the Environmental Assessment Office consider designating its project (that otherwise would not be reviewable) as a reviewable project.

the studies that must be conducted. Typically, the first formal consultation period is held during this stage.

Once the application information requirements are finalized, the proponent starts gathering the required information, conducting the studies and assembling their application.

When the application is submitted by the proponent, the Environmental Assessment Office has up to 30 days to determine if the application contains the required information and analysis. Once the Environmental Assessment Office determines the application is complete, it must review the application within 180 days. This period includes a second opportunity for public consultation.

At the end of the environmental assessment, the Environmental Assessment Office prepares an assessment report identifying the potential effects associated with the project and evaluates the extent to which any adverse effects would be avoided or mitigated. This report is provided to the ministers, who decide whether or not to issue an environmental assessment certificate. If the ministers issue a certificate, proponents are legally required to adhere to conditions of the certificate.

After a project is certified, the certificate holder must ensure it is in compliance with the conditions of the environmental assessment certificate throughout the life of the project. The Environmental Assessment Office works with other government agencies to coordinate compliance oversight through inspections, reviewing the certificate holder’s compliance self-reports, and responding to complaints, etc.

The Environmental Assessment Office fulfills the Province’s legal duty to consult with First Nations throughout environmental assessments by consulting and, where appropriate, identifying measures to accommodate the interests of First Nations in relation to potential effects on established or asserted Aboriginal rights and on treaty rights.

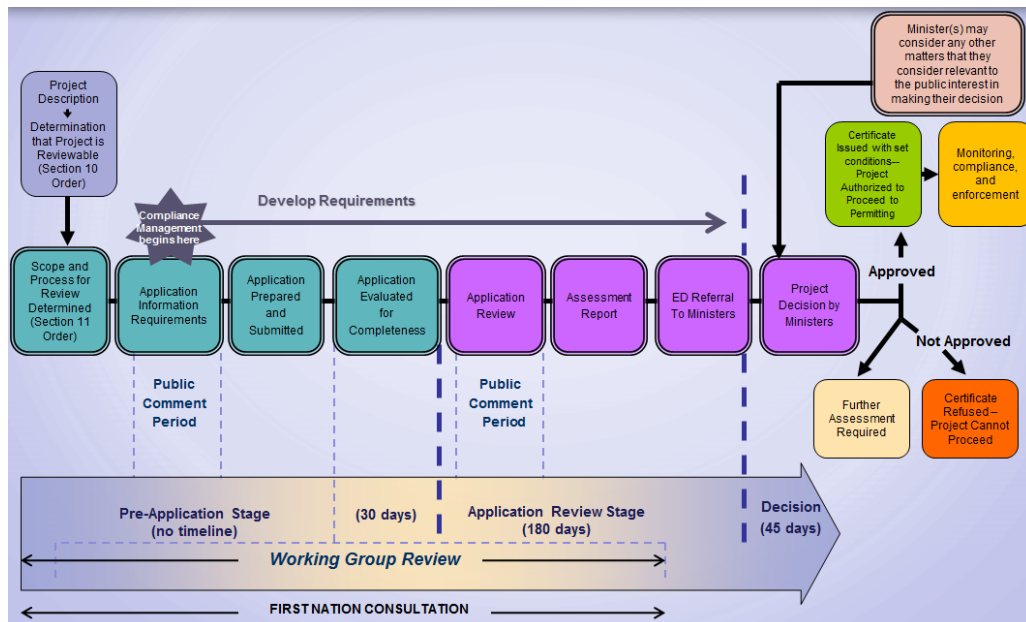


Figure 1: The environmental assessment process

Strategic Context

Environmental Assessment Activity

The demand for environmental assessment of proposed projects in B.C. remains strong and, having been directly linked to economic growth, continues to increase significantly. Of the projects currently under review by the Environmental Assessment Office, approximately 36 per cent are mining projects and 40 per cent are power projects.

In 2013/14, the Environmental Assessment Office responded to the liquefied natural gas strategy and the *BC Jobs Plan* by realigning resources to support the increase in proposed liquefied natural gas and natural gas development, mining and energy projects. Since 2012/13, 14 liquefied natural gas projects and 33 mining projects have entered the environmental assessment process with a combined capital investment of \$73 billion. In total, the potential capital investment for all 72 projects in the environmental assessment process is over \$81 billion.

Review of the Environmental Assessment Process

The mandate letter¹⁶ provided to the Minister of Environment by the Premier on June 10, 2013 called on the Minister to review the Environmental Assessment Office to ensure timelines are appropriate for both economic development and environmental protection objectives, and make recommendations for improvement as necessary. The Environmental Assessment Office has launched a review that will maintain the integrity of the environmental assessment process and strive to:

- shorten the duration of environmental assessments, from beginning to end;
- provide greater certainty and transparency for proponents and participants in environmental assessments;
- increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Environmental Assessment Office; and
- strengthen the Environmental Assessment Office's capacity and collaboration with government agencies.

Through the review, the Environmental Assessment Office will identify opportunities to contribute to the *BC Jobs Plan*, as well as contribute to efforts to control spending and balance the budget.

The practice of environmental assessment, including compliance and effectiveness management, is evolving as societal standards and government regulations change. To understand and incorporate current practices and emerging trends in environmental assessment, the Environmental Assessment Office engages with a broad community of practitioners such as federal and provincial environmental assessment administrators, the International Association for Impact Assessment and other provinces to identify and implement leading best practices used by other agencies.

¹⁶ http://www.gov.bc.ca/premier/cabinet_ministers/mary_polak_mandate_letter.pdf

Federal-Provincial Cooperation

Often major projects in B.C. require both federal and provincial environmental assessments. When this occurs, the Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency work closely together to design a review process that maximizes efficiency while meeting the requirements of both governments. The Environmental Assessment Office and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency will work together by either entering into a substitution agreement to allow the provincial process to be substituted for the federal process or coordinating the two reviews of a proposed project.

Substitution was enabled by the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* and allows the B.C. Environmental Assessment Office to conduct a single environmental assessment that meets the requirements of both federal and provincial legislation. Since the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* came into force the federal government has approved the substitution of five environmental assessments to the Province. Coordination is a tool that has existed for numerous years in which the Environmental Assessment Office and Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency conduct separate reviews but align process steps, consultation activities, public comment periods, and other activities to the greatest degree possible.

First Nations

The Environmental Assessment Office is committed to working constructively with First Nations to ensure the Crown fulfills its duties of consultation and accommodation and is guided by the following principles which can be found in more detail in the [Fairness and Service Code](#):¹⁷

- respect;
- capacity;
- government to government dialogue; and
- dealing with differences.

To improve and enhance efforts to engage effectively with First Nations, the Environmental Assessment Office has:

- refreshed First Nations consultation guidance;
- trained all staff on consultation requirements and developing preliminary strength of claim assessments;
- committed to coordinating consultation with other agencies to ensure engagement with First Nations is as respectful as possible; and
- initiated the refresh of the Environmental Assessment Office's guidance to proponents for engaging effectively with First Nations.

¹⁷ http://www.eao.gov.B.C.ca/pdf/EAO_Service_Code_20090115.pdf

Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

Goal 1: Maintaining the integrity of Environmental Assessment

The environmental assessment process is an integrated and iterative process in which the Environmental Assessment Office works with the proponent, government agencies, First Nations, potentially affected parties, and the public to ensure potentially adverse effects of a proposed project are identified and avoided or mitigated so if the project is to proceed, it will do so in a sustainable manner. As part of the Environmental Assessment Office review, proponents and participants involved in environmental assessment will receive clearer guidelines throughout the process. The Environmental Assessment Office ensures once an environmental assessment has been completed, ministers are informed of both the potential benefits and adverse effects of the proposed project before they decide whether or not to issue an environmental assessment conditional certificate.

Objective 1.1: Build upon a strong legislative framework

British Columbia's *Environmental Assessment Act* has been in place since 1994. The Act was subsequently amended in 2001 to allow for more flexible and responsive procedures. One of the major strengths of B.C.'s environmental assessment legislation is the requirement that certain phases of project reviews be completed within specific timelines.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- ensuring all relevant information is incorporated into the proponent's application for an environmental assessment certificate, thereby greatly reducing the need to suspend the review during the legislated 180-day application review period;
- developing business requirements and specifications for a modernized business management system, including the introduction of proponent self-service, increased public engagement, enhanced project tracking and alignment with the natural resource sector;
- identifying policy, practice and legislative options to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the environmental assessment review process; and
- working with other provincial agencies to improve service to clients and the public, including participating in the natural resource sector integrated decision making process.

Performance Measure 1: Application reviews in the B.C. environmental assessment process are completed within 180-days

Performance Measure	2013/14 Benchmark	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percentage of application reviews in the B.C. environmental assessment process completed within 180-days:					
B.C. process only	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Joint B.C./Canada process	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office, manually compiled

Discussion

The legislated timelines in the Act include a 180-day limit for the Environmental Assessment Office's review of applications for environmental assessment certificates. This timeline offers certainty for the public, government, First Nations, other potentially affected parties and proponents in understanding the duration of steps in environmental assessment and supports timely planning for all parties.

Objective 1.2: Ensure desired outcomes related to provincial environmental, social and economic goals are delivered to the people of B.C.

Strategies

The key strategy for this objective is to maintain and continually improve the effectiveness of the environmental assessment process by developing a quality assurance program that includes:

- continuous improvement and ongoing enhancement of the environmental assessment process before an environmental assessment certificate is issued; and
- a compliance management program to ensure projects comply with certificate conditions and commitments.

Performance Measure 2: Compliance inspections completed on certified projects

Performance Measure	2012/13 Baseline	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Number of compliance inspections completed on certified projects	17 inspections	23 inspections	21 inspections	23 inspections	25 inspections

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office compliance staff, manually compiled.

Discussion

The Environmental Assessment Office's Compliance and Enforcement Program was developed based on leading practices of other jurisdictions and builds on the expertise and resources of partner compliance agencies, such as the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, the Oil and Gas Commission, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Energy and Mines.

Throughout the life of a project, the Environmental Assessment Office and compliance partners provide oversight of the certificate holder's implementation of the requirements set in the environmental assessment certificate and permits. This coordinated approach to compliance and enforcement provides certainty and consistency for industry, government, First Nations and the public which contributes to a strong economy while ensuring environmental requirements are enforced.

Field and administrative (i.e. desk-based) inspections are key components of the Environmental Assessment Office's approach to compliance oversight. In addition to Environmental Assessment Office staff, compliance staff in the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and the Oil and Gas Commission is authorized to inspect projects under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. Working with partner agencies, the Environmental Assessment Office develops compliance inspection priorities and determines which projects will be inspected each year. Additional inspections may be conducted by the Environmental Assessment Office or partner agencies in response to complaints, to follow up on previous issues of non-compliance or if there is reason to believe a project may be out of compliance with environmental assessment certificate conditions. By responding to emerging compliance issues, compliance and enforcement staff have exceeded this year's planned number of inspections.

The Environmental Assessment Office compliance staff has projected an increase in the number of compliance inspections conducted annually through 2016/17. This projected increase reflects ongoing program improvements, such as the development of an enforcement policies and procedures manual during 2013/14 that guides compliance staff in the conduct of inspections and streamlines the enforcement responses to identified non-compliances. The Environmental Assessment Office intends to increase capacity to conduct compliance inspections through partnerships with other agencies and the development of a compliance and enforcement framework that includes a suite of policies, templates and procedures to assist staff.



Northwest Transmission Line compliance inspection by Environmental Assessment Office staff

Performance Measure 3: Timely response to compliance reports received from environmental certificate holders

Performance Measure	2013/14 Forecast	2014/15 Target	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target
Percentage of compliance reports submitted by environmental assessment certificate holders that are reviewed by staff and posted online within six weeks of receipt	80%	95%	95%	95%

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office compliance staff, manually compiled

Discussion

Upon completion of the environmental assessment process, the responsible Ministers may decide to grant a conditional environmental assessment certificate for the project. These certificates include legally binding conditions that projects must adhere to throughout the lifespan of the project (e.g. pre-construction, construction, operations, and decommissioning). Typically the certificate conditions include a requirement for certificate holders to submit periodic reports detailing compliance with each condition related to the current phase of the project.



Coursier Lake Dam decommissioning compliance inspection site

Compliance self-reports are reviewed by compliance staff from the Environmental Assessment Office to verify the reports meet the requirements of the condition, and to determine whether a field or desk-based inspection may be warranted. Self-monitoring and reporting supplements the field and administrative inspections and compliance promotion activities undertaken by the Environmental Assessment Office.

This performance measure target is set at 95 per cent to reflect that compliance reports may have issues requiring resolution prior to posting. In such cases, the review, investigation and resolution of non-compliance could exceed the six week time period. After the Environmental Assessment compliance staff review the self-reports, the documents are posted on the electronic project information centre¹⁸ on the Environmental Assessment Office’s website to ensure transparency and accountability to the public as well as to provide information that may assist industry with the environmental assessment process for similar projects. This was a new measure in 2012/13 and targets were chosen based on the Environmental Assessment Office’s expectations of the level of issues resolution that would be required before posting these self-reports. Experience has shown that 95 per cent of the time it is appropriate for the Environmental Assessment Office to post these reports within six weeks.

¹⁸ http://a100.gov.B.C.ca/appsdata/epic/html/deploy/epic_home.html

Goal 2: Successful Partnerships

Objective 2.1: Ensure effective partnerships with provincial agencies are established, maintained and enhanced

One of the key functions provided by the Environmental Assessment Office is the coordination and assessment of technical input from various provincial agencies into environmental assessments of proposed projects. The Office requires positive working relationships and effective communication networks to be successful. On October 17, 2013, the Environmental Assessment Office and the Oil and Gas Commission signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#)¹⁹ to streamline environmental assessments and permitting for liquefied natural gas projects by reducing duplication and improving timeliness. By coordinating this work and sharing information, there will be a single, predictable regulatory regime for liquefied natural gas projects from start to finish.



Paul Jeakins and Doug Caul signing the Memorandum of Understanding

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- working with other provincial ministries to identify and implement process efficiencies for projects before, during and after environmental assessment;
- providing clear direction to working group members on their roles and the type of information and input required to support the Environmental Assessment Office;
- ensuring other provincial agencies are aware of the work of the Environmental Assessment Office through outreach and relationship building; and
- partnering with other provincial agencies where possible (for example, undertaking compliance inspections).

Objective 2.2: Enhance coordination of environmental assessments with the federal government

The Environmental Assessment Office has made coordination with the federal government a top priority for many years. B.C.'s longstanding goal has been to achieve "one project, one environmental assessment," in order to reduce duplication and overlap between federal and provincial reviews, increase certainty and predictability for all participants, yet continue to maintain rigorous environmental standards.

¹⁹ http://www.eao.gov.B.C.ca/pdf/NR_OGC_EAO20131108.pdf

The Environmental Assessment Office is pursuing new opportunities to collaborate with the federal government as a result of amendments contained in the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*. B.C. is the first province in Canada to be granted substitution by the federal government, recognizing the rigour and comprehensiveness of the B.C. environmental assessment process.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- working closely with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and other government agencies to implement the new tools in the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*, and in particular, to implement substitution;
- continuing to build strong working relationships with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency through coordination on environmental assessments;
- communicating with proponents, First Nations, and the public about how B.C. and Canada work together on environmental assessments; and
- sharing best practices and lessons learned between the Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency in an effort to continually enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental assessments in B.C.

Objective 2.3: Enhanced efforts with key stakeholders

The Environmental Assessment Office requires solid working relationships with key stakeholders and ensures they have up to date and accurate information about the Office's mandate, processes, and activities. The Environmental Assessment Office continues to pursue opportunities to increase understanding of the environmental assessment process; promote open, two-way communication about the challenges and successes; and to inform these groups of the Office's performance.

Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- increasing outreach activities to engage more often and more regularly with key community, business and First Nations organizations;
- consulting with key groups in the development of guidance on environmental assessments;
- establishing regular opportunities for information exchange between the Environmental Assessment Office and key groups; and
- holding training workshops for environmental assessment consultants, proponents, environmental non-governmental organizations, First Nations, industry groups and professional associations to roll out new policies and procedures.

Resource Summary

Core Business Area	2013/14 Restated Estimates ⁽¹⁾	2014/15 Estimates ⁽²⁾	2015/16 Plan	2016/17 Plan
Operating Expenses (\$000)				
Environmental Assessment Office	8,754	11,714	11,714	11,714

⁽¹⁾ For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2013/14 have been restated to be consistent with the presentation of the 2014/15 Estimates.

⁽²⁾ The \$2.96M 2014/15 increase in the Environmental Assessment Office is to ensure timely and predictable environmental assessments as a result of the increase in major developments within the province.

* Further information on program funding and vote recoveries is available in the [Estimates and Supplement to the Estimates](#).

Appendix

Ministry of Environment Contact Information

Headquarters

Victoria

Telephone: 250 387-1161

Fax: 250 387-5669

Website: www.gov.bc.ca/env/

Additional contact information can be found at www.gov.bc.ca/env/contacts.html.

Regional Offices

Coast Region

West Coast

Nanaimo Office:

Telephone: 250 751-3100

Fax: 250 751-3103

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/van-island/

Other offices: Black Creek, Duncan, Goldstream Park, Queen Charlotte City, Parksville, Port Alberni, Port Hardy, Ucluelet

South Coast

Surrey Office:

Telephone: 604 582-5200

Fax: 604 930-7119

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/lower-mainland/

Other offices: Brackendale (Squamish), Cultus Lake, Maple Ridge, North Vancouver, Sechelt, Powell River

Southern Interior Region

Cariboo/Thompson

Kamloops Office:

Telephone: 250 371-6200

Fax: 250 828-4000

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/thompson/

Williams Lake Office:

Telephone: 250 398-4530

Fax: 250 398-4214

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/cariboo/

Other offices: Clearwater, Lillooet, Merritt, Kelowna, Oliver, Princeton, Vernon, 100 Mile House, Quesnel

Kootenay/Okanagan

Nelson Office:

Telephone: 250 354-6333

Fax: 250 354-6332

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/kootenay/

Other offices: Castlegar, Creston/West Creston, Fernie, Grand Forks, Invermere, Golden, Revelstoke

Penticton Office:

Telephone: 250 490-8200

Fax: 250 490-2231

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/okanagan/

Cranbrook Office:

Telephone: 250 489-8540

Fax: 250 489-8506

Northern Region

Skeena

Smithers Office:

Telephone: 250 847-7260

Fax: 250 847-7591

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/skeena/

Other offices: Atlin, Burns Lake, Dease Lake, Terrace/Lakelse Lake

Omineca

*Environmental Protection Division
Conservation Officer Service
Prince George Office:
Telephone: 250 565-6135
Fax: 250 565-6629*

*Environmental Sustainability
Parks and Protected Areas Division
Prince George Office:
Telephone: 250 565-6135
Fax: 250 565-6940*

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/omineca/

Other offices: Vanderhoof, Mackenzie, Mount Robson, Fort St. James

Peace

Fort St. John Office:

Telephone: 250 787-3411

Fax: 250 787-3490

Website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/peace/

Other offices: Chetwynd/Moberly Lake Park, Dawson Creek, Fort Nelson/Liard Hotsprings

Report all Poachers and Polluters

Telephone: Dial Toll-Free 1-877-952-7277

Website: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cos/rapp/form.htm>

Environmental Assessment Office Contact Information

Second Floor

836 Yates Street

PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria B.C. V8W 9V1

Email: eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca

Website: www.eao.gov.bc.ca

Water Management Projects and South and Westcoast Region

(Dams, Dykes and Diversions, Shoreline Modification, and Groundwater Projects)

Scott Bailey – Executive Project Director

250 356-1763

Scott.Bailey@gov.bc.ca

Coal and Aggregates Projects and Kootenays Region

(Industrial mineral, construction stone, sand and gravel)

Karen Christie – Executive Project Director

250 387-2200

Karen.L.Christie@gov.bc.ca

Food Processing, Waste Management, Destination Resorts and Transportation Projects and Northwest Region

Chris Hamilton – Executive Project Director

250 387-5606

Chris.Hamilton@gov.bc.ca

Power and Industrial Projects and Northeast Region

Brian Murphy – Executive Project Director

250 387-9409

Brian.Murphy@gov.bc.ca

Metal Mining Projects, Thompson Okanagan and Cariboo Region

Shelley Murphy – Executive Project Director

250 387-2563

Shelley.Murphy@gov.bc.ca

Oil and Gas Projects and Omineca Region

Trish Balcaen – Executive Project Director

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Trish.Balcaen@gov.bc.ca

EA Process and Communications

Greg Leake – Director, Client Communications and Engagement

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Greg.Leake@gov.bc.ca

Policy, Legislation, Compliance, Intergovernmental Relations and First Nations

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250 387-6758

Paul.Craven@gov.bc.ca

Environmental Assessment Operations

Michelle Carr – A/Executive Lead, Environmental Assessments

250 387-9408

Michelle.Carr@gov.bc.ca

Associate Deputy Minister's Office

Doug Caul

250 356-7475