

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

**2016/17 – 2018/19  
SERVICE PLAN**

**February 2016**



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## Minister Accountability Statement



The *Ministry of Environment and the Environmental Assessment Office 2016/17 - 2018/19 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Polak".

Honourable Mary Polak  
Minister of Environment  
February 5, 2016

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## Purpose of the Ministry

The Ministry of Environment is responsible for the protection, management and conservation of B.C.'s water, land, air and living resources. Its expertise in science, research and analysis are central to supporting all its responsibilities. Ministry legislation, regulation and public outreach activities ensure a safe and healthy environment for British Columbians, sustainable economic development, and clear and predictable decisions for the public and business community.

Key Ministry functions include:

- Leading action on climate change
- Managing discharges to the environment
- Proactively responding to environmental risks
- Protecting B.C.'s biodiversity including ecosystems, native species and natural habitats
- Managing the province's parks and protected areas
- Developing legislation, regulations and policies based on sound scientific knowledge and expertise
- Monitoring and enforcing compliance with environmental laws and regulations

The Ministry strives to ensure that all British Columbians will continue to benefit from the effective and prudent management of natural resources, allowing future generations to enjoy a safe and healthy environment.



*Cathedral Provincial Park and Protected Area*

# Strategic Direction and Context

## Strategic Direction

All Ministers, as members of the B.C. Executive Council (Provincial Cabinet), are provided letters from the Premier outlining their key responsibilities. The Minister of Environment's mandate letter can be reviewed [on the government website](#).

In addition to responding to the specific direction outlined in the mandate letter, this service plan illustrates the ways in which the Ministry is supporting the Government's [Canada Starts Here: BC Jobs Plan](#) and the [Province of British Columbia Strategic Plan \(2014/15-2017/18\)](#).

## Strategic Context

British Columbia is world renowned for its unique and diverse environmental features. The northern, interior and coastal regions host a wide variety of ecosystems, plant and animal species, and intact predator-prey systems. With an abundance of clean and safe water, land and air, British Columbia provides a rich and healthy environment for its citizens, visitors and natural inhabitants to live and prosper. Its vast parks and protected areas system - one of the largest in North America - plays a fundamental role in protecting B.C.'s natural legacy. The diversity of outdoor recreation and stunning vistas make BC Parks a cornerstone for the province's "Super, Natural British Columbia" tourism identity both at home and abroad.

With the responsibility of environmental protection comes the opportunity to sustainably develop natural resources such as liquefied natural gas, mining and forestry. The Ministry of Environment plays a key role in providing strategic science-based knowledge, policies and regulations that guide how activity can sustainably take place on the land base. This is reflected in the new *Water Sustainability Act* and forthcoming comprehensive provincial spill response regime. The Province remains committed to world-leading environmental protection laws. The Ministry continues to provide the leadership and guidance necessary to strike the balance where both the environment and economy thrive.

At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, 2015, B.C. shared its successes and pursued new alliances related to zero emission vehicles, adaptation and forest carbon programs. B.C. is now working with the federal government, provinces and territories to establish a Pan-Canadian Framework to meet national greenhouse gas emission targets. Global climate change has already impacted B.C., resulting in consequences for the environment and economy. Effective, proactive environmental management will help reduce the risk of damage and costs before they occur and allow B.C. to excel in green jobs and investments, as well as technology and training.

It is only through collaboration, however, that these goals will be realized. The Province works in partnership with First Nations, federal and local governments, neighbouring jurisdictions, industry and citizens of British Columbia in order to collectively respond to a changing ecological and socio-economic climate.

# Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

## Goal 1: Effective, long-term action on climate change

### Objective 1.1: Maintain B.C.'s global leadership on climate change

B.C. is a world leader in climate change preparedness and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. These efforts are contributing to B.C.'s growing green, clean technology economy.

#### Strategies

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Coordinating cross-government policy work that supports communities, families, businesses and local governments to save energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Encouraging other jurisdictions to follow B.C.'s leadership in establishing effective policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Strengthening B.C.'s carbon neutral government performance with an increased emphasis on public sector greenhouse gas emissions reductions and investing in strategic carbon offsets
- Supporting competitiveness of B.C. business and industry through continued development of market mechanisms – such as the Carbon Tax – and ongoing work to align provincial regulatory programs

Reduction targets for B.C. are among the most ambitious in the world. To assess the success of its efforts, the Ministry reports on provincial greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis and reports on progress to targets bi-annually.

### Performance Measure 1: Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions

| Performance Measure  | 2007/08 <sup>1</sup><br>Baseline | 2013/14<br>Actual  | 2016/17<br>Target   | 2017/18<br>Target   | 2018/19<br>Target                                |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------|---|---|--|
| Annual level of greenhouse gas emissions in B.C. relative to 2007 levels | 65.9 <sup>2</sup><br>megatonnes  | 62.4<br>megatonnes | 18% reduction<br>by 2016<br>(54.0<br>megatonnes) <sup>3</sup> | 33% reduction<br>by 2020<br>(44.1<br>megatonnes) <sup>3</sup> | 33% reduction<br>by 2020<br>(44.1<br>megatonnes) |

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, [British Columbia Greenhouse Gas Inventory Report 2013](#).

<sup>1</sup> Data based on calendar years.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers have been revised from the *2015/16-2017/18 Service Plan* due to federal data updates.

<sup>3</sup> Targets shown in this table reflect the targets for 2016 and 2020 set under the [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Act](#).

## Discussion

In 2012, the Province met its interim target of a six per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions below 2007 levels. Emissions increased slightly from 2012 to 2013. As a result, provincial greenhouse gas emissions were 5.3% below baseline levels. B.C. remains committed to achieving the 2050 target of 80% below 2007 levels and is revitalizing its climate plan to keep the province on a path towards its long term climate goals.

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

The Ministry leads efforts to improve the capacity of decision makers in managing risks associated with climate change in British Columbia.

#### Strategies

The Ministry leads efforts by:

- Evaluating the potential human and financial risk from climate change and identifying options to reduce risk to acceptable levels
- Collaborating with partners to develop and disseminate effective risk management approaches
- Reviewing, updating and implementing legislation, policies and programs to ensure B.C. is prepared for and resilient to the impacts of climate change

Government is working with stakeholders in climate sensitive sectors to assess risk and prioritize actions to successfully adapt to a changing climate.

### **Performance Measure 2: Review core B.C. Government activities to determine if existing objectives can be met in a changing climate**

| Performance Measure   | 2012/13<br>Baseline | 2015/16<br>Forecast | 2016/17<br>Target <sup>1</sup> | 2017/18<br>Target | 2018/19<br>Target |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Completion of risk or sector based policy, strategy or operational reviews for climate sensitive business areas | 2                   | 5                   | 6                              | N/A <sup>2</sup>  | N/A <sup>2</sup>  |

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled.

<sup>1</sup> Targets are cumulative.

<sup>2</sup> This performance measure will complete in 2016/17.

## Discussion

Since this measure was introduced in 2012/13, reviews of agriculture, forests, transportation, mining, coastal flood protection and extreme precipitation have been completed. In 2015, assessments for the oil and gas sector and energy demand in Northeast B.C. were completed. A review of the health sector is projected to be complete by the end of 2016/17.



## **Goal 2: Clean and safe water, land and air**

### **Objective 2.1: Enhanced protection and stewardship of water resources**

The Ministry develops innovative tools and strategies for water resource management through relationships with First Nations, local and federal government, industry and environmental groups. Strong science and policy inform resource management decisions, ensuring B.C.'s supply of clean, fresh water is sustainable and responsive to a changing climate and growing demands.

#### **Strategies**

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Providing leadership in the development of water strategies, policy, legislation and regulations to protect and manage the quality and quantity of surface water and groundwater
- Developing and implementing monitoring strategies for surface water, groundwater and aquatic ecosystem health
- Collaboratively developing transboundary water management agreements with neighbouring jurisdictions

In 2014 the *Water Sustainability Act* was passed to provide new tools for managing surface water and groundwater as a single resource. The Ministry is now leading the development of supporting policies and regulations.

### **Objective 2.2: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our land**

The Ministry manages environmental pressures from development and waste generation through the prevention of toxins and waste entering the environment. It ensures minimal environmental impact where discharges to the environment are inevitable or hazardous materials are used.

#### **Strategies**

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Managing the authorization of discharges from human activities such as mining, landfills, sewage treatment, smelters and pellet plants
- Providing provincial leadership in municipal solid waste reduction through mandatory regional solid waste management plans and the promotion of organics recycling
- Performing ongoing oversight of mandatory product stewardship programs

The ministry uses regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to achieve these strategies. Actions include updating the [Solid Waste Management Planning Guideline](#) and overseeing the implementation of the Recycling Regulation to strengthen waste management.

### Performance Measure 3: Municipal solid waste disposal

| Performance Measure                                       | 2012/13<br>Baseline | 2015/16<br>Forecast | 2016/17<br>Target | 2017/18<br>Target | 2018/19<br>Target |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Per capita municipal solid waste disposal (kg per person) | 570                 | 500                 | 450               | 400               | 375               |

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled.

#### Discussion

Municipal solid waste means waste from residential, commercial, institutional, demolition, land clearing or construction sources and may include refuse specified by the Ministry of Environment to be included in a waste management plan. The per capita disposal rate is an estimate of how many kilograms of solid waste one person sends to a landfill or other disposal sites in a given year. B.C. continues its progress toward the long-term target of 350 kilograms per person by 2019/20.

### Performance Measure 4: Organic waste disposal

| Performance Measure   | 2012/13<br>Baseline | 2015/16<br>Forecast | 2016/17<br>Target | 2017/18<br>Target | 2018/19<br>Target |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Per cent of population covered by an organic waste disposal restriction | 5%                  | 66%                 | 68%               | 70%               | 70%               |

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled.

#### Discussion

Organic waste represents up to 40% of all waste currently sent for disposal. The Ministry continues to work toward the long-term target of 75% of the population covered by an organic waste disposal restriction by 2019/20.

### Objective 2.3: Enhanced protection and stewardship of our air

In order to protect human health and the environment, the Ministry manages activities that influence air quality.

#### Strategies

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Establishing air quality objectives to inform decision making and support local airshed management initiatives
- Monitoring air quality to better understand the impacts from human activities and environmental events such as forest fires
- Regulating contaminated air emissions from industry and non-point sources such as wood stoves and open burning, as well as promoting clean technology standards for industrial air emissions

- Working with other governments to establish and implement national air quality management systems

As part of the Northeast Air Monitoring Program, an initiative that tracks potential impacts on air quality from the oil and gas industry, the Ministry operates air quality monitoring stations in the Peace region. Real time monitoring data, from these stations and others across the province, is shared with the public on [BCAirQuality.ca](http://BCAirQuality.ca), responding to growing public demand for air quality information.

### **Objective 2.4: Effective management of environmental risks and threats to public safety**

Risks to living organisms, the environment and the economy can be caused by effluents, emissions, wastes, resource depletion or other living organisms. In the case of environmental emergencies and risks to public safety, the Ministry is prepared to respond swiftly and effectively.

#### **Strategies**

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Completing the development of a comprehensive provincial spill response regime, including a province-wide preparedness and response organization with new legislative and regulatory requirements
- Establishing risk assessment frameworks to determine where action is most critical (e.g. managing remediation of high-risk contaminated sites)
- Preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species
- Proactively dealing with dangerous wildlife that pose a high risk of causing injury or death

The Province's first priority in managing environmental risk and public safety is prevention. For example, in the case of human wildlife conflict, the Ministry enforces laws regulating attractants in urban areas and delivers proactive public education in partnership with Wildsafe BC.

### **Goal 3: Healthy and diverse native species and ecosystems**

#### **Objective 3.1: Stewardship and management of natural values on B.C.'s land base**

The Ministry plays a critical role in defining and delivering the conservation objectives that preserve biodiversity across the province. Its strategic and scientific expertise in the management and analysis of B.C.'s natural values influences the work carried out by partner ministries. Within the Ministry, the natural values in provincial parks and protected areas are managed through conservation plans.

### **Strategies**

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Defining the principles, scientific foundation, and policies for a provincial approach to conservation, including the Conservation Framework, First Nations agreements, the [Cumulative Effects Framework](#) and the [Environmental Mitigation Policy](#)
- Assessing and reporting on the state of conservation values and determining where action is most critical, at a provincial and regional scale
- Collaborating with First Nations and communities in protected area planning and management to preserve and care for natural and cultural assets
- Managing parks and protected areas for ecological representation, biodiversity and landscape connectivity

Data and information on species and ecosystems is used to assess and report on biodiversity values to British Columbians. The Province works closely with inter-jurisdictional colleagues to align conservation priorities, contributing to regional, national and international conservation objectives.

### **Objective 3.2: Conservation and enhancement of native species and ecosystems**

The Ministry works to assess, set priorities and determine actions for the conservation and recovery of plants, animals and ecosystems.

### **Strategies**

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Securing and restoring native species and ecosystems through area and threat-based initiatives
- Setting objectives and leading strategic planning for biodiversity management, as well as implementing research programs to support conservation and inform decision-making
- Collaborating with the federal government, First Nations, stakeholders and partner ministries to develop and implement recovery strategies and action plans for species at risk
- Operating the Conservation Data Center to collect and disseminate status information on plants, animals and ecosystems in the province

The Ministry is determining new ways of establishing conservation priorities and achieving outcomes. Efforts and actions will target comprehensive approaches to increase resilience, maximize return on investment and benefit multiple species and ecosystems.

## **Goal 4: Sustainable use of British Columbia's Natural Capital**

Natural capital is the province's stock of natural assets which include water, land, air and all living things.

### **Objective 4.1: Inventory, monitoring, science and assessment for robust decision making**

The Ministry acquires, manages and analyzes data and information on water, land, air, species and ecosystems. Strong, solid information and science provide the platform for natural resource decision making across the province.

#### **Strategies**

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Ensuring that relevant monitoring and research is conducted and pertinent data is collected in order to support and solve resource management issues
- Incorporating the economic and social value of our natural capital into the development of policies and programs
- Continuing to advance the provision of data and information to the public and interested parties

The Ministry manages various environmental monitoring networks, such as air, groundwater and snow, in order to examine the state and trends of our environment. Information received from these networks and other programs is critical for tracking trends over time, interpreting connections between the environment, human wellbeing and the economy, and for measuring progress towards sustainability.

### **Objective 4.2: Policies, standards and regulations that are clear, consistent and predictable**

Clear and consistent policies, standards and regulations increase certainty for economic development while ensuring the protection of human health and the environment. A predictable regulatory environment supports a positive investment climate.

#### **Strategies**

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Incorporating world-leading approaches and best achievable technologies into environmental guidelines, policies and regulations
- Engaging with environmental groups, First Nations, industry and the public on the development of regulatory requirements and standards

- Ensuring the timely review of permit applications in support of business certainty and environmental protection

The Ministry routinely reviews its policies, regulations, fees and fines to ensure they include best available information, technology and practices.

**Performance Measure 5: Clean technology standards**

| Performance Measure  | 2008/09<br>Baseline | 2015/16<br>Forecast | 2016/17<br>Target <sup>1</sup> | 2017/18<br>Target | 2018/19<br>Target |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Number of environmental discharge tools (standards, guidelines or objectives) incorporating current best achievable technology practices | 3                   | 10                  | 11                             | 12                | 13                |

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, corresponding policy, guideline, code of practice, or regulation.

<sup>1</sup> Targets are cumulative.

**Discussion**

Pollution sources are routinely assessed for new opportunities to reduce environmental impacts. Developing approaches that minimize impacts while ensuring economic viability is complex and involves collaboration with industry, local government, academia and other experts.

**Objective 4.3: Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The Ministry conducts inspections of regulatory requirements and where necessary takes enforcement action commensurate with any non-compliance. Investigations are typically conducted where a more stringent response may be required such as court prosecution.

**Strategies**

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Continually improving its regulatory oversight with an ongoing emphasis on inspections of higher risk sites
- Conducting investigations into environmental violations and implementing new enforcement tools such as administrative monetary penalties to address non-compliance
- Publicly naming companies and individuals [subject to enforcement action](#), as well as those with [outstanding environmental court fines](#)

Integrity in the regulatory regime established to protect human health, the environment and public safety is critical. Promotion of compliance, and achieving high rates of voluntary compliance, are top priorities. Where necessary, however, the Ministry will take action to enforce requirements using a variety of enforcement tools.

### Performance Measure 6: Inspections (new)

| Performance Measure  | 2014/15<br>Baseline | 2015/16<br>Forecast | 2016/17<br>Target | 2017/18<br>Target | 2018/19<br>Target |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Number of inspections conducted under the <i>Environmental Management Act</i> <sup>1</sup> | 711                 | 734                 | 765               | 780               | 796               |

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled.

<sup>1</sup> Inspections (in office reviews and on site examinations) conducted under the act and associated regulations.

### Discussion

Ministry staff conduct inspections in order to determine compliance with regulatory requirements. Many factors influence the frequency and nature of inspections, including risk to human health and the environment, compliance history of the regulated party, resources and community concerns.

### Objective 4.4: Optimize outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities within parks and protected areas

Strategic management of parks and protected areas enable British Columbians and others to connect with the province's iconic landscapes in a sustainable and memorable way. The system covers over 14 million hectares of land with approximately two per cent in recreational facility development.

### Strategies

The Ministry leads these efforts by:

- Providing new and diverse recreation, heritage and cultural visitor experiences in addition to traditional BC Parks services and offerings
- Growing and enhancing BC Parks as a pillar in B.C.'s tourism industry
- Fostering public engagement to connect citizens to the management of parks and protected areas

The Province is committed to increasing use and accessibility to parks and protected areas through facility development and infrastructure investment. Economically, provincial park visitors contribute \$279 million to the provincial GDP.

### Performance Measure 7: Park visitation

| Performance Measure            | 2014/15<br>Actual | 2015/16<br>Forecast | 2016/17<br>Target | 2017/18<br>Target | 2018/19<br>Target |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Number of recorded park visits | 21.4 million      | 22.0 million        | 22.3 million      | 22.6 million      | 22.9 million      |

Data Source: Ministry of Environment, manually compiled.

### Discussion

The number of recorded park visits measures the contribution of the provincial parks to the government's priorities of healthy communities, tourism and the economy. It also indicates trends in public uptake of outdoor recreation opportunities provided by BC Parks.

# Resource Summary

| Ministry of Environment                      | 2015/16<br>Restated<br>Estimates <sup>1</sup> | 2016/17<br>Estimates | 2017/18<br>Plan | 2018/19<br>Plan |
|--|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Operating Expenses (\$000)</b>            |   |                      |                 |                 |
| Environmental Protection                     | 8,356   | 8,560                | 8,829           | 8,936           |
| Environmental Sustainability                 | 20,143  | 20,503               | 20,527          | 20,685          |
| BC Parks                                     | 31,089  | 31,158               | 31,373          | 31,494          |
| Conservation Officer Services                | 15,221  | 15,284               | 15,489          | 15,642          |
| Climate Action <sup>2</sup>                  | 19,307  | 17,526               | 15,793          | 15,842          |
| Executive and Support Services               | 24,006  | 24,151               | 24,233          | 24,278          |
| Sub-Total                                    | 118,122                                       | 117,182              | 116,244         | 116,877         |
| Park Enhancement Fund                        | 1,800   | 1,800                | 1,800           | 1,800           |
| Sustainable Environment Fund                 | 18,935  | 18,935               | 18,935          | 18,935          |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>138,857</b>                                | <b>137,917</b>       | <b>136,979</b>  | <b>137,612</b>  |
| <b>Ministry Capital Expenditures (\$000)</b> |   |                      |                 |                 |
| Executive and Support Services <sup>3</sup>  | 20,438  | 17,537               | 17,537          | 17,537          |
| Park Enhancement Fund                        | 400   | 400                  | 400             | 400             |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>20,838</b>                                 | <b>17,937</b>        | <b>17,937</b>   | <b>17,937</b>   |



| Other Financing Transactions (\$000) |               |               |               |               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Disbursements <sup>4</sup>           | 13,000        | 13,000        | 10,000        | 10,000        |
| Net Cash (Requirements)              | 13,000        | 13,000        | 10,000        | 10,000        |
| Total Disbursements                  | <b>13,000</b> | <b>13,000</b> | <b>10,000</b> | <b>10,000</b> |
| Total Net Cash Source (Requirements) | <b>13,000</b> | <b>13,000</b> | <b>10,000</b> | <b>10,000</b> |

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2015/16 are consistent with the presentation of the *2016/17 Estimates*.

<sup>2</sup> Climate Action decreases of \$1.8m in Fiscals 2016/17 and FY 2017/18 related to scheduled industry program development payments.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry Capital Expenditures, Executive and Support Services decrease of \$2.9 million from cyclical efficiencies in the fleet replacement strategy.

<sup>4</sup> Other Financing Transactions decrease of \$3.0 million commencing in 2017/18 resulting from a scheduled reduction of contractual obligations to purchase Greenhouse Gas Emissions offset 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 (“Office”) neutrally administers the process of assessing proposed major projects for potentially significant adverse environmental, social, economic, health and heritage effects. The Office seeks to meaningfully engage the public and Aboriginal groups in the environmental assessment process and is responsible for overseeing compliance and enforcement of reviewable projects throughout the life of the project.

## The Environmental Assessment Process

Proposed projects are reviewable if they meet or exceed thresholds defined in the [Reviewable Projects Regulation](#).<sup>1</sup>

The Minister of Environment can also designate any project that has not been substantially started as reviewable. In addition, proponents may request their project be accepted for review.<sup>2</sup>

Once the Office determines that an application is complete, it must review the application within 180 days. The Office prepares an assessment report for the Minister of Environment and the second deciding minister, which identifies the potential effects associated with the project, including impacts to established or asserted Aboriginal and treaty rights, and conclusions on the significance of those effects. Based on the assessment report and the recommendations of the Office’s Executive Director and any other information ministers deem relevant, ministers may either grant or refuse a certificate. Alternatively, ministers may order further assessment should they determine that the information is insufficient on which to base a decision. If 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 certificate through permitting, construction, operating and decommissioning phases. The Office works with other government agencies to coordinate compliance oversight through inspections, reviewing the certificate holder’s compliance self-reports, responding to complaints and other efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, if a proposed coal mine is projected to produce  $\geq 250,000$  tonnes of coal per year, it would be automatically reviewable.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

# Strategic Context

## Environmental Assessment Activity

The demand for environmental assessment of proposed projects in B.C. remains strong. Under the [BC Jobs Plan](#) and the [Liquefied Natural Gas Strategy](#), the number of proposed projects in B.C. continues to increase. As of January 2016, of the 32 active projects currently under review, approximately 50% are mining, 16% are energy/power, and 22% are liquefied natural gas projects. In total, the potential capital investment for all active projects currently in the environmental assessment process is over \$91 billion.<sup>3</sup>

## Federal-Provincial Cooperation

Often major projects in B.C. require both federal and provincial environmental assessments.

In 2013, the BC Environmental Assessment Office and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (Agency) signed a Memorandum of Understanding that establishes expectations, roles and procedures for implementing the substitution of environmental assessments in B.C.. Under substitution where both federal and provincial environmental assessments are required, there can be a single review process (the provincial one) and two decisions (federal and provincial).

As of January 2016, the federal government has approved the substitution of 13 environmental assessment reviews. Where substitution does not apply, British Columbia and the Agency work together to coordinate working group review and other technical and administrative aspects of the two assessment processes.

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<sup>3</sup> Effective 2016/2017, the Office will be reporting only on those projects actively pursuing the requirements for an environmental assessment certificate. In previous Annual Service Plans and Reports, capital investment data has reflected the total potential value of all projects that have entered, but not yet completed the review process for an environmental assessment certificate.

# Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

## Goal 1: Conducting timely and efficient Environmental Assessments

### Objective 1.1: Build upon a strong legislative framework

British Columbia has had environmental assessment legislation with a dedicated office since 1995. The Environmental Assessment Office neutrally administers a legally defined process that is predictable, transparent, timely, procedurally fair and holds all participants accountable.

#### Strategies

Key strategies for this objective include:

- Appropriately scoping project reviews and instituting a project management discipline in environmental assessments to adhere to the legislated 180-day application review period
- Collaborating with other provincial agencies to improve service to clients, reducing overlap and duplication with other federal and provincial regulators
- Identifying policy and practice options to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the environmental assessment review process
- Service modernization, including an enhanced web presence and electronic collaboration tools

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

| Performance Measure  | 2015/16 Forecast | 2016/17 Target | 2017/18 Target | 2018/19 Target |
|--|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Per cent of application reviews completed within 180-days: |                  |                |                |                |
| B.C. process only  | 100%             | 100%           | 100%           | 100%           |
| Joint B.C./Canada Process                                  | 100%             | 100%           | 100%           | 100%           |

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office, manually compiled.

## Discussion

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

### Objective 1.2: Ensure the effectiveness of environmental assessments

Continuously improving effectiveness and efficiency is key to maintaining the integrity of B.C.'s environmental assessment process.

#### Strategies

Two key strategies for this objective include ongoing implementation of:

- A quality assurance program that ensures continuous improvement of the environmental assessment process
- A compliance and enforcement program to ensure projects comply with certificate requirements

### Performance Measure 2: Compliance inspections completed on certified projects

| Performance Measure  | 2015/16 Forecast | 2016/17 Target | 2017/18 Target | 2018/19 Target |
|--|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Number of compliance inspections completed on certified projects | 23               | 25             | 27             | 29             |

Data Source: Environmental Assessment Office, manually compiled.

## Discussion

The Office's compliance and enforcement program undertakes various compliance oversight activities, including field inspections, administrative inspections, review of complaints, investigations, compliance promotion and enforcement. The program works closely with other agencies to ensure effective coordination of [compliance oversight](#) of environmental assessment conditions and permitting requirements.

Inspections are a key tool that the Office uses to promote compliance and enforce legally binding environmental assessment certificate conditions. The Office ensures continuous improvement of environmental assessment certificates by incorporating lessons learned through inspections and other compliance oversight into new environmental assessments. Beginning in early 2016, the Office will be posting all inspection reports and enforcement actions to ensure access to compliance information for the public and permitting authorities.

# Resource Summary

| Environmental Assessment Office | 2015/16<br>Restatement <sup>1</sup><br>Estimates | 2016/17<br>Estimates | 2017/18<br>Plan | 2018/19<br>Plan |
|---------------------------------|--|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Operating Expenses (\$000)      |  |                      |                 |                 |
| Environmental Assessment Office | 11,610   | 11,828               | 11,893          | 11,872          |

**Notes:**

<sup>1</sup> For comparative purposes, amounts shown for 2015/16 are consistent with the presentation of the *2016/17 Estimates*.

# Appendix

## Ministry of Environment Contact Information

### Headquarters

Victoria

Telephone: 250 387-9870

Fax: 250 387-6003

Website: [www.gov.bc.ca/env/](http://www.gov.bc.ca/env/)

Additional contact information can be found at [www.gov.bc.ca/env/contacts.html](http://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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/thompson/)

*Williams Lake Office:*

Telephone: 250 398-4530

Fax: 250 398-4214

Website: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/cariboo/](http://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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://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/](http://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*

*Water Stewardship Division:  
Phone: 250 565-6135  
Fax: 250 565-6629*

Website: [www.env.gov.bc.ca/peace/](http://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**

836 Yates Street

PO Box 9426 Stn Prov Govt

Victoria B.C. V8W 9V1

Email: [eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca](mailto:eaoinfo@gov.bc.ca)

Website: [www.eao.gov.bc.ca](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca)

Additional contact information can be found at [http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/contact\\_us.html](http://www.eao.gov.bc.ca/contact_us.html)