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Issuance of *Directive 085: Fluid Tailings Management for Oil Sands Mining Projects*

The Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) announces the release of *Directive 085: Fluid Tailings Management for Oil Sands Mining Projects*, which sets out requirements for managing fluid tailings for oil sands mining projects. It outlines application requirements, the application review process, performance reporting, and the surveillance and compliance process.

A draft version of the directive was released for feedback on September 17, 2015, and the feedback period closed on November 17, 2015. The AER also established a technical advisory committee (TAC) to review and provide comments on the draft directive. It was made up of representatives from industry, environmental nongovernmental organizations, First Nations, Métis, municipalities, and the AER. The directive has been updated to reflect input from the TAC and the public. A summary of the feedback and the AER response is available on the directive's webpage.

This directive replaces *Directive 074: Tailings Performance Criteria and Requirements for Oil Sands Mining Schemes*, aligns with the *Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP)*, and implements the *Lower Athabasca Region: Tailings Management Framework for the Mineable Athabasca Oil Sands (TMF)*.

The new directive represents an outcomes- and risk-based approach that holds operators accountable for managing their fluid tailings. The directive will be revisited and a new edition published in 2017. Key requirements include the following:

- Existing operators are required to submit fluid tailing management applications by November 1, 2016.
- Operators must minimize fluid tailings accumulation by ensuring that fluid tailings are treated and reclaimed progressively during the life of the project.
- New fluid tailings must be ready to reclaim by ten years after the end of mine life, while legacy fluid tailings must be ready to reclaim by the end of mine life.
- Operators will report annually on the performance of their fluid tailings management plans.

- The AER will prepare an annual performance report on fluid tailings management.

Directive 085 is available on the AER website, www.aer.ca. Printed copies of the directive can be purchased from AER Order Fulfillment, Suite 1000, 250 – 5 Street SW, Calgary, Alberta T2P 0R4; telephone: 403-297-8311 or 1-855-297-8311 (toll free; option 2); fax: 403-297-7040; e-mail: [InformationRequest@aer.ca](mailto:InformationRequest@ aer.ca).

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