

News Release

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Results of AER dam safety inspections released

For immediate release

Calgary, Alberta (November 5, 2015)...Following commitments made after the Auditor General's report on [dam safety in Alberta](#), the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) has released the results of its dam safety inspections held earlier this year.

Containment structures like dams and liquid impoundments, including oil sands tailing ponds, coal tailings ponds, and oil and gas fluid storage ponds, are used in the environmentally responsible development of Alberta's energy resources. Over the past six months, AER inspectors have examined 100 of the 111 containment structures that it regulates to ensure that they are constructed, operated, maintained, and decommissioned safely.

Of the 11 structures not inspected, 9 were only recently approved for start of construction. The remaining 2 will be inspected next year and are considered low risk.

"The AER has a proactive inspection program in place to ensure that dams and other containment structures related to energy resource development remain in compliance with safety and environmental requirements. The most recent round of inspections uncovered one significant deficiency, which is the subject of an active investigation," said Kirk Bailey, executive vice president of Operations with the AER. "Albertans should feel confident that the AER is committed to protecting what matters most – public safety and the environment."

Inspections of 55 oil sands structures and 14 oil and gas structures did not identify any significant deficiencies.

AER staff also inspected 31 coal mine structures. One structure, owned by Coal Valley Resources, was found to be significantly deficient. Inspectors found erosion within the structure, which was causing a free flow of water from a partially reclaimed pit, which is a contravention of several *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* approval conditions. The AER is investigating this noncompliance and will release the results of its investigation when complete. Information about the ongoing investigation can be found on the [Compliance Dashboard](#).

In March 2014, the AER assumed responsibility for regulating all containment structures used in the development of Alberta's energy resources. In March 2015, the AER committed to making results of the dam safety inspections public.

The Alberta Energy Regulator ensures the safe, efficient, orderly, and environmentally responsible development of hydrocarbon resources over their entire life cycle. This includes allocating and

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conserving water resources, managing public lands, and protecting the environment while providing economic benefits for all Albertans.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

Following commitments made after the Auditor General's report on [dam safety in Alberta](#), the Alberta Energy Regulator has released the results from its inspections of 100 of the 111 dams and liquid impoundments that it regulates in the province. In all but one instance, AER requirements were met.

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Backgrounder: AER-regulated dams

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