



Alberta Wilderness Association

## **News Release: New Restrictions on Renewable Energy Must Be Applied to Oil and Gas Sector**

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Wind energy and other renewable developments are facing new restrictions that could impede their growth. Photo © C. Olson.

Alberta has announced new restrictions on renewable energy development, including

government, and there will be a call for reclamation securities for projects.

While fossil fuels are the leading cause of climate emissions and land degradation, these tough restrictions aren't being applied to oil and gas projects.

"These restrictions should not be applied only to renewable energy developments, they should also apply to the far more harmful oil and gas industry," says Ruiping Luo, Conservation Specialist with AWA.

Fossil fuels account for over 75 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, according to the United Nations, as well as cause extensive air and water pollution. Oil and gas developments are over 15 times more lethal to wildlife than wind and solar power. Alberta needs to transition to renewable energy, to meet Alberta's Emissions Reduction and Energy Development Plan, and for environmental and human health.

These new regulations could severely limit new renewable energy development. Until last August, renewable energy was booming in Alberta, with over three-quarters of Canada's new renewable energy development occurring in the province. The moratorium on renewables, applied suddenly and without consultation, hindered this growth. These new regulations could further damage investor confidence, slowing Alberta's transition to renewable energy.

There is a need for consistent regulation within the energy sector. Renewable energy should not be developed in sensitive ecosystems, or in areas with high biodiversity. However, these restrictions must be applied fairly across all sectors, including the oil and gas industry.

Oil and gas is allowed on all agricultural classes in Alberta, despite the large land mass required for conventional oil and gas, and the extensive damage to soil and water from contamination. It can take decades to remediate soils that are contaminated by oil and gas, during which the land cannot be used for farming. Decommissioning of oil and gas is also a major concern, with cleanup costs estimated to be as high as \$130 billion, while barely any security has been collected. Mandatory security requirements for renewable energy development must also apply to the oil and gas sector.

Farmland is not the only landscape at risk. Many rare and sensitive ecosystems are threatened by development, such as the McClelland Lake Wetland Complex, a

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provide food and traditional medicines to Indigenous peoples, yet they are not protected from industry. If the goal is for food security, shouldn't these critical harvest areas also be protected from development?

Alberta is showing blatant favoritism to the oil and gas sector, with these regulations applying only to renewable energy developments, while overlooking the vast destruction caused by fossil fuels. While regulations are needed to direct responsible energy development, these regulations must be applied across all sectors, including the oil and gas industry.

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Dedicated to the conservation of wilderness and completion of a protected areas network, AWA inspires communities to care for Alberta's wild spaces through awareness and action.

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