



January 4, 2012

New advisory body to coordinate transportation planning in oil sands region

Fort McMurray... A new advisory committee will review and will make recommendations to the Alberta government on the current and future transportation needs of the Athabasca oil sands region. The committee of municipal, industry and provincial representatives will take into account the region's unique economic and infrastructure needs and the importance of the oil sands to the province's economy.

"Our government recognizes the critical importance of collaboration with stakeholders to make informed decisions on roads, highways, rail, and air in the oil sands area," said Jeff Johnson, Minister of Infrastructure and Minister responsible for the Oil Sands Secretariat. "This committee will be a powerful tool for the region to plan and coordinate its transportation needs and will help support the continued growth of the entire region."

The Athabasca Oil Sands Area Transportation Coordinating Committee will include representatives from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the Oil Sands Developers Group, the Alberta Economic Development Authority, the Fort McMurray Airport Authority, the Northern Alberta Development Council, Cindy Ady, MLA for Calgary-Shaw, and the Alberta government.

The committee will meet a minimum of four times a year and will provide strategic advice and recommendations on transportation planning, design, funding, construction, operations and maintenance; including all classes of roads, transit, rail, and air traffic within the Athabasca oil sands area.

Heather Kennedy, Suncor Energy Vice President, provides extensive experience and knowledge in managing the impacts involving development. She will chair the new committee and provide leadership in collaborating with industry and local communities, government and associations in the area to develop a strategy for public transportation infrastructure.

"This is about working together to meet the transportation needs of the local community," said Minister of Transportation Ray Danyluk. "By involving all the partners, the future transportation plans for the area will truly reflect the needs of the region, industry and municipalities."

The committee will provide strategic advice and recommendations to the Minister of Infrastructure and the Minister of Transportation, the Mayor of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, and the Chair of the Board of Directors of the Oil Sands Developers Group.

“Transportation has been a key concern for our municipality, and the establishment of this committee helps address that concern,” said Melissa Blake, Mayor of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. “By having the municipality as part of this committee, a local perspective is guaranteed to be present and active in transportation decision making. We look forward to collaborating with the Province and industry to improve and enhance our transportation networks and resolve the region’s transportation challenges.”

This committee is part of Responsible Actions, Alberta's 20-year strategic plan for the oil sands, which includes efforts to support further planning and development of vibrant communities in the oil sands regions. For more information about Responsible Actions, visit www.oilsands.alberta.ca.

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Background: Athabasca Oil Sands Area Transportation Coordinating Committee

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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To call toll-free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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Athabasca Oil Sands Area Transportation Coordinating Committee

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The committee will provide advice on the coordination of transportation planning, design, funding, construction and operation including highways and roads, transit, rail and air traffic in the Athabasca oil sands area.

The committee will provide strategic advice and recommendations that:

- I. Facilitate alignment and coordination with the priorities of the Government of Alberta, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the Oil Sands Developers Group and the other stakeholders;
- II. Enhance coordination and alignment of interests with the Government of Alberta, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and the oil sands industry concerning long-range planning of the transportation network to better support the movement of goods, services and people within the oil sands area;
- III. Inform the delivery of coordinated, effective and efficient transportation infrastructure including operations and maintenance;
- IV. Evaluate the overall development of the transportation network, and identify the responsibility of each party to contribute to the delivery of network elements and activities required to successfully coordinate and implement the strategic advice and recommendations, and
- V. Explore innovative delivery mechanisms that may incorporate the participation of all parties in the development, planning, design, funding, construction and operation of transportation infrastructure and creative transportation alternatives.

Membership

The initial membership will include:

- Heather Kennedy, SUNCOR, committee chair
- Cindy Ady, MLA for Calgary-Shaw
- Mike Colborne, Alberta Economic Development Authority
- Dan Dibbelt, representing the Northern Alberta Development Council
- Scott Clements, Fort McMurray Airport Authority
- Tim Grant, Deputy Minister, Alberta Transportation
- David Morhart, Deputy Minister, Alberta Infrastructure
- Glen Laubenstein, CAO, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
- Wesley Holodniuk, Division Manager, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
- Kendall Dilling, Laricina Energy, and the Oil Sands Developers Group
- Kara Flynn, Syncrude, and the Oil Sands Developers Group

Additional, non-voting member: Sandra Klashinsky, Oil Sands Sustainable Development Secretariat

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