

# Reclamation in the Special Areas

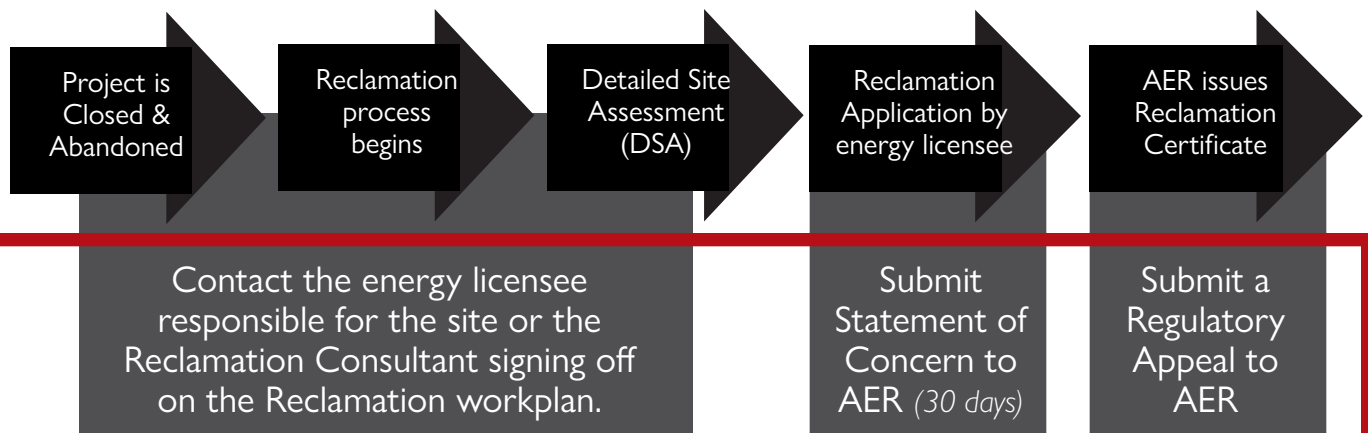
The **Alberta Energy Regulator (AER)** is the single regulator of energy development in Alberta, from application and exploration, to construction and operation, to decommissioning, closure and reclamation.

The *Environmental Enhancement and Protection Act (EPEA)* legally obligates energy licensees to return the disturbed specified land to a state functionally equivalent to what it was before development; they remain responsible, in perpetuity, for any infrastructure left beneath the surface<sup>^</sup>.

The AER must be satisfied that all requirements have been met before certifying a site reclaimed.

The **Special Areas Board (SAB)** is an agency of the Government of Alberta and manages the surface activities of industrial dispositions located on public lands located in the Special Areas.

SAB Agrologists work with agricultural leaseholders to provide support during the reclamation process. SAB leaseholders & landowners have input in AER's reclamation process on lands they occupy/own via direct consultation with energy licensees and/or reclamation practitioners performing reclamation work.



## RECLAMATION CONTACTS

### Special Areas Board

Property Administration  
 Rangeland Management  
 Diana Boxma, B.Sc. / P.Biol.  
 P: (403) 854-0948  
 E: [diana.boxma@specialareas.ab.ca](mailto:diana.boxma@specialareas.ab.ca)  
[www.specialareas.ab.ca](http://www.specialareas.ab.ca)

### Alberta Energy Regulator

General Inquiries:  
 P: (403) 297-8311  
 P: (1-855-297-8311 (toll free)  
 E: [inquires@aer.ca](mailto:inquires@aer.ca)  
[recremquestions@aer.ca](mailto:recremquestions@aer.ca)  
[www.AER.ca](http://www.AER.ca)  
<https://www.aer.ca/providing-information/news-and-resources/enerfaqs-and-fact-sheets/enerfaqs-expressing-your-concerns>

To submit a Statement of Concern  
 E: [SOC@aer.ca](mailto:SOC@aer.ca)

To submit a Regulatory Appeal  
 E: [RegulatoryAppeal@aer.ca](mailto:RegulatoryAppeal@aer.ca)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## How is reclamation success determined by the Alberta Energy Regulator (AER)?

The AER is responsible to administer Alberta Environment & Parks (AEP) Reclamation Criteria available at <https://www.alberta.ca/land-conservation-and-reclamation-guidelines-for-native-grasslands.aspx>. This criteria identifies successful reclamation when the lands in question have reached “*equivalent land capability*” which is “*the ability of the land to support various land uses [after reclamation] that is similar to the ability that existed prior to an activity [disturbance] being conducted on the land, but that the individual land uses will not necessarily be identical.*”

Equivalent land capability is evaluated using landscape, soil, and vegetation parameters for the end land use and age of the activity to determine whether land function and operability of the site (disturbed area) is comparable to the control (surrounding area).

Reclamation practitioners (hold professional status with regulated professional body in Alberta) work to provide unbiased assessment on whether reclamation obligations of the licensee have been met. Professional sign-off for reclamation work completed is required by the AER.

## What is the role of the Special Areas Board in the reclamation process?

Special Areas Rangeland Agrologists will assist leaseholders in managing issues related to reclamation processes on public lands in the Special Areas. This can include:

- Completing reclamation-related interviews
- Authorizing some reclamation activities (e.g. importing topsoil, seed mix design, releases for surface improvements, etc.)
- Completing site inspections to provide comment on reclamation work prior to energy licensee submitting a Reclamation Application
- Submitting Statements of Concern and/or Regulatory Appeals when they are required to manage reclamation issues.

## How can landowners or leaseholders bring up concerns about reclamation work?

If landowners and/or leaseholders are not satisfied with the reclamation work being performed on the land they own or occupy in the Special Areas, some ways to bring up concerns include:

- Documenting specific landowner/leaseholder concerns which have been brought forward to the energy licensee and/or reclamation practitioner
- Contacting SAB Rangeland Agrologist(s) for assistance in the reclamation process
- Submitting a **Statement of Concern** to the AER within 30 days of receiving copy of a Reclamation Certificate Application from the energy licensee
- Submitting a **Regulatory Appeal** to the AER when outstanding issues arise after the AER has issued a Reclamation Certificate

## How do I file a complaint with the AER?

A complaint about an energy development can be filed anytime by contacting the AER at [inquiries@aer.ca](mailto:inquiries@aer.ca) or by calling 1-855-297-8311.

More information can be found at <https://www.aer.ca/protecting-what-matters/giving-albertans-a-voice/file-a-complaint>.