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## Climate Change and Emissions Management Act

Passed in 2003, Alberta's Climate Change and Emissions Management Act is the first, and at present the only, legislation pertaining to climate change in Canada (Government of Alberta 2007a). The goal of the Act is to reduce emissions in Alberta by 50 percent below 1990 levels by 2020.

The Act has been accompanied by the [Specified Gas Emitters Regulation](#) and the [Administrative Penalty Regulation](#). These regulations have been put in place to detail the requirements of emissions reductions, as mentioned in the Act, and to specify penalties for contravention.

Establishing a general context, the preamble to the Act recognizes Alberta's need for a sustainable environment and wise management of natural resources. Innovative technologies that reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, and the establishment of target emissions, are to be developed without impairing economic growth (Queen's Printer 2007b). Recent amendments to the Act (Government of Alberta 2007b) that specify targets and company obligations stipulate that :

- facilities that emit more than 100,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases a year will be required to reduce their emissions intensity by 12% below their 2003-2005 emissions average;
- new companies must reduce their emissions intensity by 2% per year after the third year of operation; and
- companies have three ways to meet their reductions: they can make operating improvements, buy an Alberta-based credit, or contribute to the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund.

Improvements to operation can be conducted through improved technology or by elimination of sources of greenhouse gas emissions.

Alberta-based credits can be purchased from a company that has more than met its 12% reduction target, or from a smaller (<100,000 tonnes/year) company that has voluntarily reduced emissions. The idea is that companies that can reduce emissions most cheaply will do so, motivated by the opportunity to sell credits, and thereby reduce emissions at the lowest possible cost to society.

The third option is to pay a \$15 penalty for every tonne of greenhouse gases emitted over their target. The money goes to the Climate Change and Emissions Management Fund, whence it is directed to the creation of new technologies or other strategic projects designed to reduce provincial emissions.

At present these new amendments target the approximately 100 facilities that emit more than 100,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases annually in Alberta. These 100 facilities account for about 70 percent of industrial greenhouse gas emissions in Alberta.



Air quality has an impact on all living creatures.

Source: Michael Strickland  
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