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## Policies and Initiatives

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) is the framework legislation governing Environmental Impact Assessments in Canada. Since it became law, several policies and initiatives have extended the CEAA. Strategic Environmental Assessment is a federal initiative related to improving policy sustainability. In Alberta, [Cumulative Effects](#) Assessment extends the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act.

### Federal

#### Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is designed to incorporate environmental considerations into new policies, plans and programs that may eventually become public policy. Guidelines on the SEA procedure can be found in the Cabinet Directive on the Environmental Assessment of Policy, Plan and Program Proposals (CEAA 2006; 2007b).

### Provincial

#### Cumulative Effects Assessment

In Alberta, a [Cumulative Effects Assessment](#) (CEA) is required as part of the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (EPEA) and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA) (Government of Alberta, 2003). An accepted definition of *cumulative effects* is: "the changes to the environment caused by an activity in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable human activities" (Alberta Environment, No date). A CEA should therefore identify any such effects, including those that have occurred historically and are now part of the baseline, and determine the overall environmental impact expected from original effects combined with new project effects. The uncertainties associated with a CEA are generally greater than those associated with the overall CEAA because it is harder to predict the result of all environmental interactions.

The Cumulative Environmental Management Association (CEMA) was created in Fort McMurray in June 2000. CEMA is a multi stakeholder organization in place to study the cumulative environmental impacts in the oil sands region and to make recommendations for regulation and create management frameworks. To learn more about this organization visit the [CEMA website](#).

Because the Athabasca River drains a large part of the oil sands region, it is important to understand how activities at different sites along the river are influencing downstream environments both individually and collectively.

#### The Canada-Alberta Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation

The [Canada-Alberta Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation](#) is in place to ensure that the authority and legislation of each government is recognized when an EIA is needed for a project that comes under both jurisdictions (AENV 2005). Projects that qualify for this agreement are major industrial and resource projects requiring federal and provincial permits, licenses, approvals or that are supported by federal funding.

The agreement first came into place in 1993 and was renewed July 22, 2005.

#### First Nations Consultation Guidelines

The 2007/ 2008 [First Nations Consultation Guidelines](#) were revised by the government of Alberta in November 2007.

The guidelines are in place to ensure that the government of Alberta fulfills its commitment to consult with First Nations people regarding development projects on Crown land that may adversely effect traditional uses or rights.



Policies and Initiatives are in place to protect the environment from cumulative effects of oil sands development

Source: Suncor Energy Inc.  
(click to enlarge)

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