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## Cumulative effects management

*Edmonton...* The *Draft Land-use Framework* will use a cumulative effects management approach to manage the impacts of development on air, land, water and biodiversity at the regional level.

Every landscape is different and requires different outcomes to balance economic, social, and environmental needs. The *Draft Land-use Framework* calls for a cumulative effects management approach to address the combined impacts of existing and new activities within each of the six proposed regions.

### What is cumulative effects management?

In October 2007, the Alberta government announced a broad new approach to address cumulative effects. The cumulative effects management approach:

- considers the total impact of development in a region, over time, in decision-making;
- determines the capacity of the land and the environment to support the effects of all activities; and
- identifies thresholds for the air, land, water and biodiversity.

Using this approach, regional land-use plans will ensure that the impacts of development are kept within defined thresholds.

### Has this approach been used before?

A prototype project on cumulative effects management is under way in Alberta's Industrial Heartland, a 460-square kilometer area northeast of Edmonton. The plan for the Heartland:

- lays out clear targets for air quality;
- puts in place a water management framework to protect water quality and quantity; and
- establishes guidelines to protect the land in the region.

Targets, outcomes and actions apply to all major industrial users in the region.

### What impact will this approach have on decisions about how the land is used?

Use of cumulative effects management:

- focuses planning and decision-making on the impacts of activities, rather than the activities themselves;
- ensures that all the impacts of all activities, over time, are considered and included;
- encourages innovation to protect the environment as we continue to grow and develop; and
- considers implications of development on a regional basis because every landscape is different.

### How is this a change from the current system?

Alberta's system for assessing the environmental impacts of new developments has usually been done on a project-by-project basis. The cumulative effects management approach:

- assesses all potential impacts of all projects within a region, both existing and new; and
- creates a more comprehensive view of development and land-use activity.

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