



**MESSAGE FROM  
DAN MCFADYEN,  
CHAIRMAN OF  
THE ERCB**

**JANUARY 1, 2008**, began with a significant change: The Alberta Energy and Utilities Board (EUB) was reorganized into the Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) and the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC). A key goal of the reorganization was to ensure that Alberta's expanding energy and utility sectors are regulated effectively and efficiently. While the change was a major undertaking, the ERCB team rose to the challenge, enabling a smooth and successful transition.

**Making Regulations More Effective**

The ability to change is ingrained in our organization: Over the past seven decades, we have consistently reexamined our regulatory requirements and improved them wherever needed. Strengthening regulations regarding Alberta's oil sands remained a key commitment for the ERCB in 2008. Among our top priorities was the need to more effectively regulate tailings.

In June 2008, we released a draft directive inviting input on new industry-wide criteria for tailings management. Following an extensive review, *Directive 074: Tailings Performance Criteria and Requirements for Oil Sands Mining Schemes* was issued in February 2009. The directive requires operators to submit a clearly defined plan for dealing with tailings ponds and includes specific enforcement actions if tailings performance criteria are not met.

Another major step in regulating Alberta's oil sands was the development of *Directive 073: Requirements for Inspection and Compliance of Oil Sands Mining and Processing Plant Operations in the Oil Sands Mining Area*. Issued in December 2008, the directive details the requirements operators of oil sands mining and processing plant operations must follow. Initially released in draft form, the directive reflects feedback from government, industry, and the public.

In 2008, our Fort McMurray Regional Office more than tripled the number of inspections conducted at mineable oil sands facilities compared to the previous year. These inspections are very thorough and can take up to one week to complete.

On the public safety side, we made key updates to *Directive 071: Emergency Preparedness and Response Requirements for the Petroleum Industry*. The revised directive reflects extensive feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including the public, first responders, and the provincial government. The updates to this directive significantly enhance Alberta's already strict emergency preparedness and response requirements.

### **Engaging Albertans**

Enhancing opportunities to work with the public and industry has been another important commitment for the ERCB. Our Community and Aboriginal Relations (CAR) team and Land Challenge program are two key ways we are delivering on that commitment.

CAR builds positive relationships with local stakeholders and helps enhance their understanding of the ERCB and our processes. Operating out of many of our nine Field Centres, the team engages stakeholders through a wide range of activities, from kitchen table discussions to community meetings. CAR also works with key stakeholders to help ensure that we hear their concerns and feedback, building trust and confidence.

Another important way we are engaging Albertans is through our Land Challenge program, an initiative aimed at finding practical solutions to deal with local residents' concerns not being met by the regulatory system. Through this program, the ERCB can take a lead role in bringing together industry,

local governments, and the public to improve information exchange, minimize the potential impacts of energy projects, and enhance the ERCB's application processes. I believe this process works and will continue to be a valuable tool going forward.

### **Enhancing Our Technology**

The ERCB is also committed to improving our technical expertise. This includes making ongoing enhancements to our mobile air monitoring units (AMUs). The AMUs employ sensitive, high-tech equipment to detect gas leaks. Our first AMU was commissioned 30 years ago in the form of a modified station wagon. Today, we have two vastly enhanced AMUs boasting an array of cutting-edge technology to help ensure that Albertans are safe.

### **A Great Place to Work**

Our commitment to building a positive work environment was recognized when the ERCB was named one of Alberta's Top 40 Employers in 2008. Receiving this honour, particularly in the same year we completed a major reorganization, reflects the dedication and hard work of everyone who helps make the ERCB a great place to work.

### **Committed to the Future**

While 2008 has been a year of exciting progress, we know that more challenges lie ahead. The ERCB will meet those challenges through our commitment to building an even stronger regulatory framework for Alberta, a framework that protects and sustains our public, our environment, and our energy resources. ✦



Dan McFadyen  
Chairman

## ERCB BOARD MEMBERS



**Front row:** Michael Bruni, Jack Ebbels, Gordon Miller

**Back row:** Brad McManus, Dan McFadyen, Bonnie McGinnis (Board Secretary),  
George Eynon, Jim Dilay

**Not pictured:** Theresa Watson