

PROPOSED NEW ALBERTA ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY CAUCUS

Context

On June 1, 2013 at the Alberta Environmental Network AGM at the Bennett Environmental Centre in Edmonton, Alberta representatives of several member groups proposed the creation of the AEN Environmental Regulatory Caucus.

Caucuses are the action arms of the AEN. They exist for member groups to share resources and jointly work on their shared agendas. Often this involves meeting with government, industry and other relevant sectors. New caucuses and working groups can be initiated if there is sufficient need and member group interest.

At the June 1 AEN Annual Meeting, concerns and questions were raised about the new "Alberta Energy Regulator". A number of members argued against participation in government-sponsored public consultations on the regulations and rules governing that regulator. They saw this as cooption of ENGOS in the continual deregulation of Alberta's environmental regulatory system and dismantling and transfer of Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development regulatory responsibilities to the new energy regulator. Some other members, while sharing the questions and concerns about the regulator, have made an effort through the government consultation process to influence how the new Alberta Energy Regulator will make its decisions and operate. There was large agreement that an AEN regulatory caucus open to all interested members – whether working inside or outside the system for better environmental regulations - would add value.

The Proposed Environmental Regulatory Caucus

The AEN Environmental Regulatory Caucus will work to provide balance and opportunities for individuals and groups to work together to inform, be informed, address the challenges to civil society of this

most troubling trend of deregulation and work for better environmental regulations and for effectively applied regulations. This caucus would also facilitate information sharing and the development of common strategies.

While the Alberta Energy Regulator is the current major concern, the caucus would also focus more broadly on any regulatory issues, developments or changes of interest to its members. With the Alberta Energy Regulator, our goal would be to apply public pressure to the Government of Alberta and the Alberta Energy Regulator to develop and implement regulations in the interest of the public, rather than just in the interest of the energy industry.

All AEN member groups are invited to join this caucus.

Backgrounder on the Alberta Energy Regulator

The government is folding all regulatory powers related to the energy sector, now scattered among separate bodies, into one entity, dubbed the Alberta Energy Regulator. The Energy Resources Conservation Board (ERCB) will disappear and regulatory powers within provincial departments such as Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development will be transferred to the Alberta Energy Regulator, ironically during Alberta Environment Week, 2013.

It is part of the government's attempt to streamline the regulatory process, something the industry has been seeking for years.

The environmental movement is increasingly concerned that, without public pressure, the regulatory authority will continue the trend of serving the interests of big energy, at the expense of the interests of the citizens of Alberta as it develops regulations.

Indeed, Gerry Protti, the founding president of the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers – the energy industry's lobby group – has been named as the chairman of the Alberta Energy Regulator.