

Weekly NEWS

esaa Environmental Services Association of Alberta

An Information Service for Alberta's Environment Industry

The Week Ending October 9th, 2020



Virtual RemTech 2020
October 14 & 15, 2020

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ESAA is pleased to announce that the final program for RemTech

2020 is now available. You can view the program at: <https://www.esaa.org/remtech/agenda/>. The program features 63 presentations spread over two days. Please take a moment to check out the agenda.

Virtual RemTech Registration Fees

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Member	\$99 + GST	Register Now
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ALBERTA IS SETTING THE STAGE FOR CLEAN GEOTHERMAL DEVELOPMENT

Alberta is taking a deep dive to attract new investment in geothermal energy as it continues to build out and diversify the province's energy sector.

Using emerging made-in-Alberta technology and decades of drilling expertise, the government is taking steps to create the conditions for industry to safely and successfully harness clean energy from the earth.

The government is set to have discussions this fall with key groups and introduce legislation to create greater policy and regulatory certainty for investors and Albertans.



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Several Alberta companies are in the midst of pilot projects aimed at proving the commercial power generation viability of geothermal technology in the province. A strong geothermal sector has the potential to create jobs and economic opportunity for Indigenous and rural remote communities, while lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

“Opportunities like this are rooted in Alberta’s extensive experience in oil and gas drilling. The ability to diversify Alberta’s economy and build a geothermal sector is enabled by the vast geological and technical expertise of our energy industry. To succeed and achieve this potential, we must provide a stable and predictable regulatory environment. We see an enormous opportunity for geothermal energy to power homes, businesses and remote communities and we are taking steps to unlock that full potential.” - *Sonya Savage, Minister of Energy*

Existing oil and gas wells can assist in the extraction of geothermal energy. The ability to reuse this existing infrastructure could facilitate investment while limiting additional land impacts.

By implementing a geothermal policy, the government will provide industry with clarity on rules and processes, establish an approach to land use and liability management, and protect landowners and mineral rights owners.

“The Government of Alberta’s support for the geothermal industry through the introduction of regulations and policies will create new opportunities for the energy sector, while also allowing Alberta to integrate renewable resources into the existing energy industry. CanGEA believes that Alberta has tremendous accessible geothermal resources suitable for district heating and other space heating opportunities spread throughout the province. Some locations can also support electricity projects. CanGEA applauds the Alberta government’s leadership in developing regulations and policies that will allow industry to deliver social, economic, and environmental results to Albertans and all of Canada.” - *Alison Thompson, chair, Canadian Geothermal Energy Association*

“Diversifying and strengthening Alberta’s energy sector is required to create new economic opportunities while building the energy system of the future. Geothermal is the perfect example of one such bridging opportunity, because it draws on the skills of our people, the potential within the earth, and the aspirations of a low- carbon emissions future. The Energy Futures Lab has been accelerating geothermal development in Western Canada for the past five years and we are excited to see this support.” - *Juli Rohl, animator, Energy Futures Lab*

“Eavor is proud to be a part of Alberta’s economic recovery strategy, as well as to help put people back to work in the drilling and energy services sector. It’s exciting and satisfying to know that innovations that were designed for the more traditional energy sectors have found a home in a green and clean solution like Eavor-Loop™. It’s a wonderful ‘swords into plowshares’ story for Eavor and us all.” - *Bailey Schwarz, lead engineer, Eavor Technologies Inc.*

“Canadians have been at the forefront of geothermal development since the early 1970s. From sending drilling crews to far-flung places such as Japan, to exploring in South America, investing in Iceland, to participating in reservoir modelling in Italy, these are but a few things that Canadian geothermal experts have been doing. As a born-in-Alberta geothermal professional who has recently come back to Alberta after advancing projects across the globe, I am heartened by the foresight of the Alberta government to embrace this base load, long-lived, sustainable power source. An asset to be developed, whose time has come within the context of the green energy transformation. Congratulations to the Government of Alberta.” - *Dr. Catherine Hickson, vice-president, Geothermal Canada, and CEO, Alberta No. 1*

“Geothermal presents a real opportunity for Alberta’s leading drillers to get back to work on a new business line. The CAODC is pleased to work with the Government of Alberta and other stakeholders on advancing this important energy initiative. Geothermal energy development requires the exact same equipment, workers and expertise we use in oil and gas drilling, and we look forward to finding ways to collaborate. Geothermal energy represents but another strong example of how the Canadian drilling industry is actively working to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.” - *Mark Scholz, president and CEO, Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors*

Interest in geothermal energy development has increased because of several factors, including: improved available data; advances in technology; and the ability to complement other industrial and commercial processes, such as agriculture and forestry.

Quick facts

- Geothermal energy is the natural heat that originates from the Earth. It can be used for heating and cooling or to generate clean electricity.

- Currently, Alberta assesses geothermal project applications on a case-by-case basis. Given the increased interest in geothermal development, establishing a dedicated geothermal framework will enhance efficiency and clarity.
- Research from the University of Alberta has identified potential to develop this resource on a commercial scale with more than 6,100 megawatts of thermal power capacity potential and more than 1,150 megawatts of technically recoverable electrical power capacity potential across several municipal districts in western Alberta.
- Alberta has a number of advantages to develop geothermal energy, including:
 - a natural geological advantage
 - the opportunity to repurpose inactive oil and gas wells, well sites and infrastructure
 - leadership in drilling technology
 - extensive oil and gas expertise, as well as a well-established service sector
- A number of companies are conducting pilot projects in Alberta, such as:
 - Eavor-Lite demonstration project near Rocky Mountain House
 - Razor Energy's oil-geothermal co-production project near Swan Hills
 - Alberta No. 1, which is exploring the geothermal potential near Grande Prairie

WHO IS CAUSING MERCURY SPILLS IN VANCOUVER'S STANLEY PARK?

(Source: HazMat Magazine) For the third time in less than a month, a Hazmat Crew was dispatched to Vancouver's Stanley Park to clean-up a mercury spill. In each of the incidents, the cause of the spill is either a broken thermometer or broken thermostat.

In each incident, it took hazmat teams a couple of hours completely clean up the tiny droplets of metal.

Vancouver police are working with Fire officials to determine if the three incidents are related, who is responsible, and what is the possible motive.

EXPOSURE TO MERCURY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS Mercury is a naturally occurring toxic heavy metal that is widely dispersed in nature. Most human exposure results from fish consumption or dental amalgam. Exposure to high levels of mercury, including acute exposure (exposure occurring over a short period of time, often less than a day) can have serious health impacts.

Typical acute exposure to mercury occurs due to an industrial accident. Factors that determine whether health effects occur and their severity include: the type of mercury concerned; the dose; the age or developmental stage of the person exposed; the duration of exposure; and the route of exposure (inhalation, ingestion or dermal contact).

Elemental and methylmercury are toxic to the central and peripheral nervous systems. The inhalation of mercury vapour can produce harmful effects on the nervous, digestive and immune systems, lungs and kidneys, and may be fatal.

MERCURY CLEAN-UP There are several methods for cleaning up mercury spills. One method involves sprinkling sulfur powder over the contaminated area and rubbing it gently all over the surface and into the cracks with a cloth. The sulfur powder binds with mercury and can be collected with a cloth.

Environment Canada has a [guidance document](#) on how to clean up small mercury spills. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has a [133-page guidance document](#) that describes eight different treatment technologies for mercury in soil, waste, and water.

B.C. DISBURSES FIRST HALF OF FEDERAL FUNDS TO RECLAIM DORMANT OIL AND GAS WELLS

(Source: CBC News) Applications to receive a share of the second \$50-million instalment will open on Nov. 1

The first half of a \$100-million federal fund directed at cleaning up dormant oil and gas wells in British Columbia has been disbursed.

Energy Minister Bruce Ralston says work is underway to reclaim wells that have been inactive for at least five years and aren't likely to come back into service.

He says applications to receive a share of the second \$50-million instalment will open on Nov. 1, allowing B.C.-based companies to hire local workers to clean up about 2,000 dormant wells.

The program provides up to \$100,000 or 50 per cent of the cost of site cleanup, whichever is less, while Indigenous communities, local governments and landowners may also identify priority sites until the end of this month.

Ottawa pledged \$1.7 billion in April to help Alberta, Saskatchewan and B.C. clean up inactive and so-called orphan oil and gas wells, with B.C. receiving \$120 million.

There are about 7,000 dormant wells in B.C. and 770 orphan wells, meaning the sites were operated by companies that are insolvent, cannot be located or no longer exist.

The \$15-million orphan sites program administered by the B.C. Oil and Gas Commission was flooded with more than 1,100 applications when it launched earlier this year.

Another \$5 million is going to the legacy sites reclamation program to address the impacts of historical oil and gas activities on communities and wildlife.

EXTENT OF CONTAMINATION FROM FORMER REGINA REFINERY SITE STILL UNKNOWN 45 YEARS AFTER SHUTDOWN

(Source: CBC News) Saskatchewan's Ministry of Environment admits it still doesn't know how much contamination was left behind by an Imperial Oil refinery in Regina that was shut down 45 years ago, or what effects it may be having on human health and the environment.

According to documents obtained by CBC, the ministry has known for decades that at least some of the site, which sits over two aquifers, was contaminated with petroleum hydrocarbons (PHC) and other toxic chemicals. Documents also reveal that construction companies building on the site were warned about the potential for explosions or workers collapsing because of the fumes.

Critics say the government is still in the dark about the state of this site today because it allowed Imperial to determine what environmental assessment needs to be done and let the company set its own timeline.

"It sounds very much like the whole file was just completely dropped at some point," said Chris Severson-Baker, the Alberta director of the Pembina Institute, an environmental think tank.

"No follow through, no willingness to enforce their own rules."

The refinery began operation in 1916. According to a Regina Leader-Post article from 1971, the facility was a rush job, built in just three and a half months to support the war effort.

Located just southwest of Ring Road in northeast Regina, it operated until 1975, when it was shut down and decommissioned. At its peak, the facility was capable of refining 22,500 barrels of oil per day.

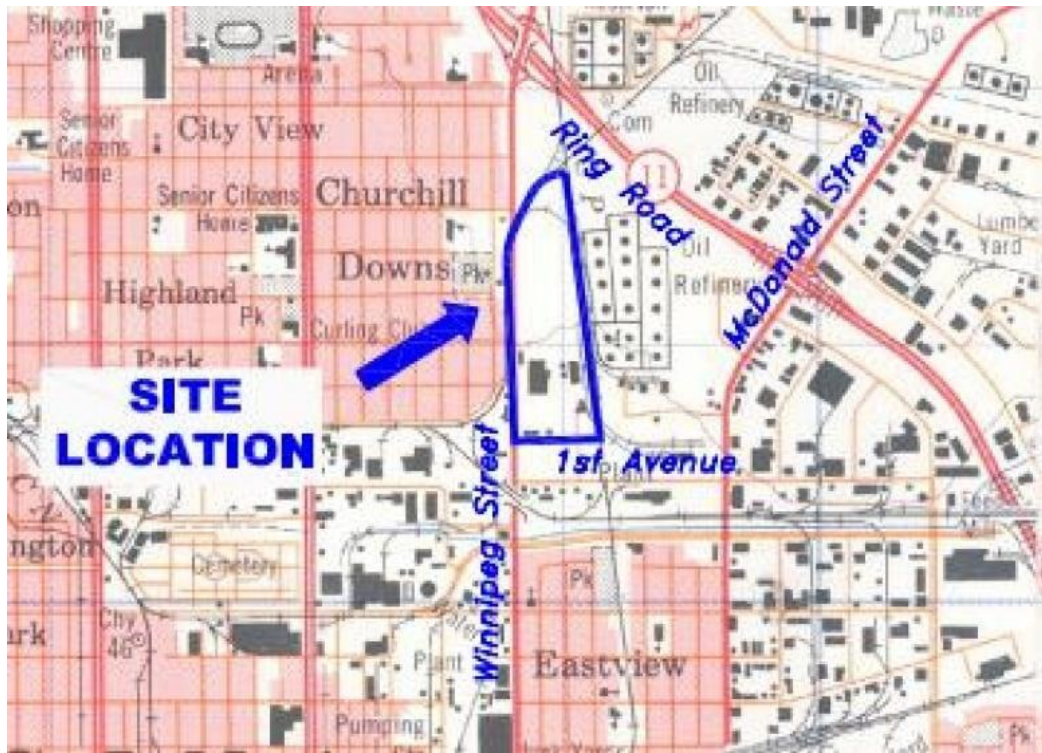
Over the decades, there has been a range of studies and assessments on various parts of the approximately 80 acre parcel. Some have indicated PHC contamination to a depth of up to 10 meters. Others have uncovered elevated levels of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene, arsenic, thallium and lead in the soil.

These chemicals, some of which are cancer causing, can be harmful to human health if they're inhaled, ingested or touched.

Work in the area has also unearthed contaminated pipes and tanks that were left in the ground after decommissioning.

All of this raised alarms for Ministry of Environment officials over the years because the site sits on top of two aquifers, including the Regina aquifer, which serve as a backup water source for the city.

The fact that the ministry still doesn't know how extensive the contamination is has fuelled concern about potential impacts on a range of issues, from human health to the environment to property values.



From 1916 until 1975, Imperial Oil operated a refinery in the northeast part of Regina. (O'Connor Associates Phase I study)

Environmental condition is still unknown

The province acknowledges that historical contamination exists on the site.

Wes Kotyk, the current assistant deputy minister responsible for environmental protection, said in a 2009 letter obtained by CBC that the contamination happened decades ago, "when environmental legislation or standards did not exist or were much more liberal."

The province said in a recent email that when the site was decommissioned in the late 1970s, much of the above-ground infrastructure was removed by Imperial, but it's unclear what remediation of the soil was completed.

The ministry said that's because its files don't contain detailed records. The official noted that the province's environmental management act didn't come into force until 1984.

The ministry also said it doesn't appear the entire site has been assessed yet.

"We believe there are some gaps because ... we haven't been provided information to show that everything has been delineated yet," said Kotyk.

In a follow-up email, CBC asked what areas had not yet been studied.

"The south end of the property, north and north west off-site, westerly off-site, and east off-site may require additional site assessment activities in order to understand the contaminants of concerns, the extent of the contaminants and the potential risk to human health and the environment," the ministry responded.

Though 45 years have passed since the refinery was decommissioned, the ministry said it's still trying to work co-operatively with Imperial and the City of Regina, which owns a portion of the property.

"There have been no orders issued to Imperial Oil or the City of Regina," a ministry official wrote. "The ministry prefers voluntary action at impacted sites. This allows responsible persons to assess and apply corrective actions in a fashion that best suits their needs, yet still achieves the desired result of a reclaimed impacted site."

Saskatchewan's environmental protection legislation gives the Minister of Environment, Dustin Duncan, the power to order a land owner to conduct an environmental assessment and remediate the property if necessary.

Duncan told CBC he's satisfied with the ministry's oversight and he believes the assessment work has "been done to the level that the ministry feels is appropriate at this time, knowing that the file is certainly not concluded."

Experts question province's 'voluntary' approach

Severson-Baker said it's "shocking" that the ministry still doesn't know the extent of the contamination and the associated risk.

"I can't think of any examples, even some of the more egregious ones, where a company was allowed to decide whether or not to do that kind of work on its own," said Severson-Baker, noting he's been working in the field of environmental cleanup for 24 years.

He said in comparable situations in Alberta, the government has taken a much tougher line and required relatively quick assessment of environmental damage.

"Companies aren't going to voluntarily do anything that they don't have to do," he said. "So there has to be the risk that the government will impose something on them that they may really dislike."

Assistant deputy minister Kotyk said this is a complicated situation.

"With a site this complex, you can't do it all like in just one site assessment," he said. "Our seasons are limited to the amount of work that can be done."

He added that industry has limited resources and the ministry can't "impose horrendous costs for something that may not provide additional information."

Kotyk said that doesn't mean Imperial is off the hook. It just means the province takes a "risk-based approach," focusing on areas which pose the greatest potential threat.

Shaun Fluker, who teaches environmental law at the University of Calgary, said that without a comprehensive assessment a truly risk-based approach is not possible.

"You can't even be doing that if you haven't taken steps to identify and clarify exactly what the extent of the contamination is," said Fluker.

He said Saskatchewan's voluntary approach was common among Canadian provinces back in the 1970s and 1980s, but that this approach has now all but disappeared.

Fluker said governments are now "far more willing to go down the enforcement route and/or compliance with a heavy stick if needed to clean or get these sorts of areas cleaned up."

According to the ministry, Imperial and the city committed in 2009 to fully assessing the former refinery lands, but the ministry still doesn't have evidence that has happened.

The ministry told CBC it would be reaching out to both organizations to ask about the timeline and what they intend to do next.

Fluker said this passive style of oversight is baffling

"It seems like the department officials are well aware of this problem but are just sitting on it," he said. "It certainly raises questions as to what exactly the cause of the inaction or delay is here. That's a real puzzle to me."

Imperial Oil and the City of Regina have both declined comment on this story because the matter is before the courts.

Land owners launch class-action lawsuit

In 2010, a group of property owners led by Clint Kimery filed a class-action lawsuit against Imperial and the city.

The suit alleges both parties were aware of contamination on the site, but failed to notify the land owners "and actively worked to conceal information about the presence of contaminants in the class area in order to preserve their financial, political and economic interests."

None of the claims in the lawsuit have been tested in court. Neither the city or Imperial Oil has filed a statement of defence. The plaintiffs say the lawsuit has been inactive for years because they've run into roadblocks and run out of money.

Kimery's company, Gunner Mudjacking, is located on the southern portion of the former refinery site, which the province admits has not yet been assessed.

Kimery, the lead plaintiff, said he filed the lawsuit because the uncertainty about contamination was affecting his business's property value and no one was willing to pay for the assessment.

He said that when he bought the land in 1988 he had no idea it was on the site of a former refinery with potential contamination problems.

According to Kimery, he learned about the issues during a tax assessment battle with the city in the early 2000s. At that time, he said, the city was attempting to triple his property taxes by deeming the land to be in a commercial area.

The more he learned, the more he wondered, "why would the city be assessing our property so high when we had that kind of history?"

He attempted to get a valuation of his land, but an appraiser told him in a letter, "there is enough evidence to suggest that further environmental investigation is required," and that until that happens, "we wish to advise that we cannot complete an appraisal."

Kimery said that puts him and the other property owners in limbo.

A documented history of contamination

He has provided CBC with a wide range of documents he obtained through access to information requests during his research.

Those documents show the City of Regina has been aware that parts of the site were contaminated since at least 1980 and the ministry has been aware since at least 1986.

Over the years, the city has approved the construction of a dairy creamery and a transit centre on the site, and also approved a wide range of businesses on the property, from a daycare to a food bank to an adult education centre.

Kimery said it's infuriating that the city will approve all sorts of business activities on what it knows to be contaminated land and yet won't ensure the entire area has been properly assessed.

In 2008, after demands from Kimery and other property owners, the province asked Imperial and the City of Regina to conduct a Phase I assessment of the land, which would provide a high-level evaluation of the history of the site and the potential of contamination.

Based on the results, the province asked in late 2008 for a Phase II assessment, which is a detailed investigation involving drilling, soil and water testing and analysis.

By late 2012, the ministry had not yet received that report and was losing patience. This prompted an official to impose a deadline and threaten to take action if the report wasn't forthcoming.

The report, which was delivered in February 2013, said that most of the soil samples didn't exceed the existing guidelines for contaminants.

However it did find elevated levels of benzene, arsenic, thallium, lead and PHC at some sample locations.

CBC asked the ministry if it ordered or recommended any work be done as a result of this study. The ministry said it made no orders, noting that it prefers a voluntary approach.

An incomplete report

Kimery voiced several concerns with this assessment.

First, he pointed out, the test holes were just one foot deep.

He said that was an odd decision, given that as early as 1980 studies in the area had found "considerable contamination from hydrocarbons" to a depth of seven to 10 meters in "all test holes drilled on the site."

He said to make matters worse, the study likely was examining fill that the city had trucked in to level the property and not the original contaminated soil.

"There's probably three or four feet of fill over that entire area," he said.

When asked, the province said Imperial and the city have the right to decide how deep to test, noting "the person responsible for each impacted site has the option to use the endpoint that they consider most appropriate for the site, as long as compliance with the regulatory requirements is maintained."

Kimery is also concerned that this assessment only examined land owned by the city and not privately owned land. That meant large swaths of the site were not assessed.

Government emails show that the ministry wanted the entire site, including Kimery's property, to be assessed.

The ministry told CBC that in 2009, Imperial and the City of Regina agreed with the ministry's request to study the entire site.

But 11 years later the ministry is still waiting for that study and doesn't know when it will happen. In an email, the ministry said it "has not yet received a timeline on completion of future investigations."

Kimery said he believes the delay may be related to his ongoing fight with the city about taxes.

"The city, I think, did not want to give us any evidence of contamination. So that's why they stopped short of this particular area," he said.

When pressed on the 11-year delay, assistant deputy minister Kotyk told CBC, "we will be asking [Imperial and the city] to look at other areas."

Former Calgary refinery also faced contamination controversy

This isn't the only Imperial Oil refinery site that has been the subject of lingering questions about contamination.

In 1975, when Imperial shut down the refinery in Regina, it also shut one down in Calgary.

In 2001, it came to light that the site — which had been turned into a residential neighbourhood called Lynnview Ridge — was contaminated with high levels of hydrocarbons and lead.

After pressure from residents, the provincial government ordered Imperial to clean up the site. The company bought up and demolished 140 homes and several apartment blocks.

By 2018, the site had been cleaned up and reopened as a park.

The situation in Regina is quite different, given that there are no homes on the property and no evidence the contamination is as severe. But Kimery said it's surprising the government hasn't taken the assessment work more seriously, given the similarities.

"The Regina refinery is a third larger than the Calgary one and 10 years older," Kimery said. "So proportionally, you would think that the Regina refinery would be that much more contaminated than the one in Calgary."

Construction on contamination

In 1979, after the refinery was shut down, the City of Regina purchased a large portion of the property and then flipped some of that land to Dairy Producers Cooperative Ltd.

The city authorized the company to build a multi-million dollar creamery on the site, where for 20 years it manufactured food-grade dairy products.

Kimery's lawsuit alleges that during construction of the creamery, "there were reports of explosions due to flammable liquids and gases emanating from the refinery property."

Correspondence obtained by CBC shows Dairy Producers management was concerned about the site.

In a 1995 letter to the province, an official with Dairy Producers wrote, "we believe that there exists the possibility that the site is contaminated. The official said the company was worried this information could jeopardize a proposed merger.

The company asked the province for a definitive statement absolving Dairy Producers and its merging partner "of liability, if any, which may be associated with the contaminated site."

The ministry wrote back that while it couldn't provide such a statement, it could offer a "letter of comfort." The official noted the site was not listed on the province's "Action on Contaminated Sites" list, which identified locations that were under action, require future action or further study.

The province also assured Dairy Producers that the thrust of the provincial legislation is that the polluter pays for any clean-up. The province noted a clean-up order would only be issued as a "last resort."

The merger went ahead.

Dairy Producers shut down its creamery in the early 2000s.

Creamery gifted to Regina Food Bank

In December 2004, the company that owned the Dairy Producers property gifted it to the Regina Food Bank for the nominal fee of \$200.

Kimery's lawsuit alleges that over the years, the City of Regina permitted and licensed the food bank "to set up food storage and distribution operations along with a technical institute, adult training school, computer centre and a child daycare and outdoor playground."

"This was all approved despite the fact that the environmental condition of the lands on which these operations would be located was unknown," the lawsuit says.

In a 2012 letter to the city about the food bank, the province confirmed that there was significant reason for concern.

"The Ministry of Environment has reviewed its files and recommends that no further development take place on the site," says the letter dated July 18, 2012. "The ministry recommends that the city of Regina deny future applications for further development on the site pending the completion of environmental and assessment activities as deemed acceptable by the ministry."

When the city sold the refinery land to the creamery, it also gave the company the right to sell property it didn't use for its facility. Dairy Producers developed Adams Street and sold lots to private businesses.

Kimery's business is on Adams Street.

After Dairy Producers shut down its facility, it sold four remaining lots totalling more than three acres to a car dealership, for \$5,000. In a letter, the owner of the dealership said "the value of the lots were decreased due to environmental concern in respect of the property."

Kimery said that sale and the Dairy Producers transfer of land to the food bank prove the contamination is dramatically affecting property value. He said it's crucial that the province order a comprehensive study.

"We're kind of in a sea of contamination here," he said.

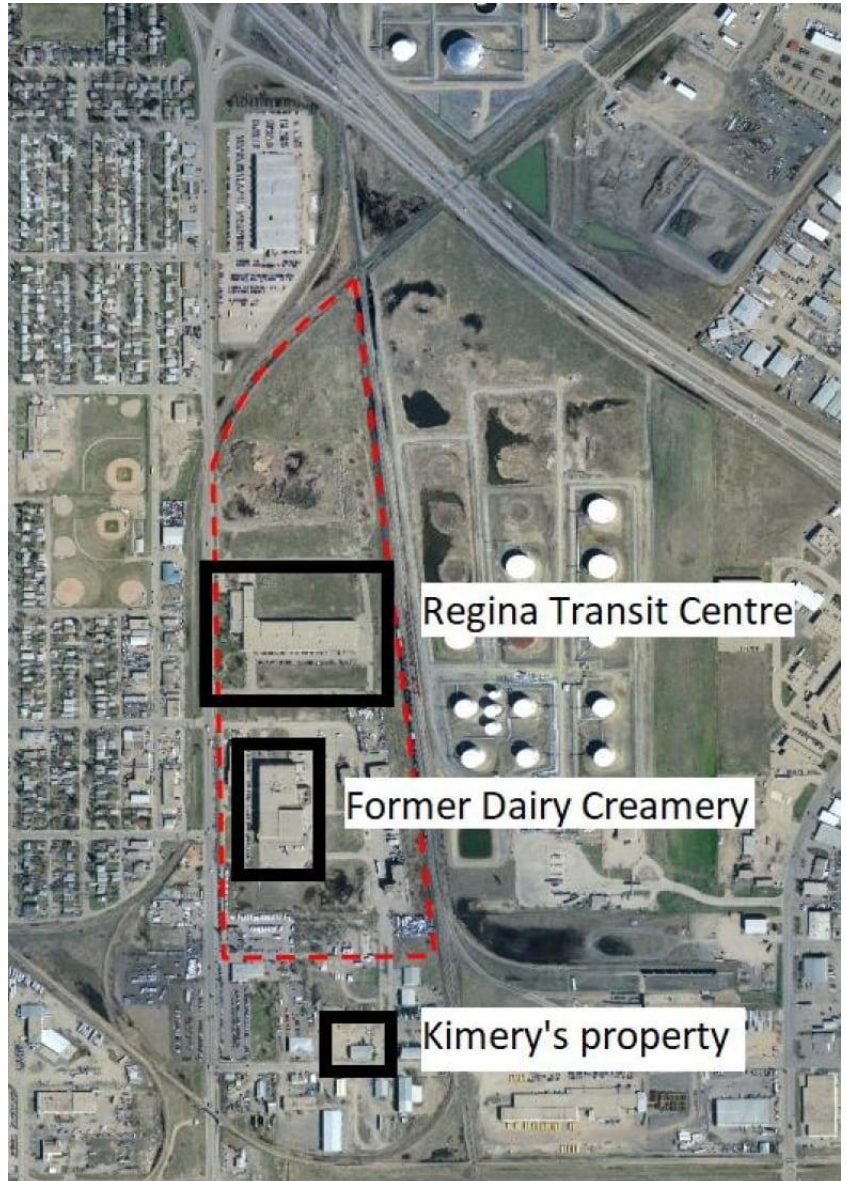
City built transit centre on contaminated land

In 1986, just as the City of Regina was preparing to build a facility for its transit fleet on the former Imperial lands, it received studies warning about contamination in the soil and groundwater.

One study noted that while above-ground structures had been removed, there were underground storage tanks and an extensive system of industrial piping that remained at least partially intact. The report also said there was evidence of "considerable contamination" from hydrocarbons as deep as 10 meters underground and that the "hydrocarbon contamination is considered potentially severe."

It warned of possible consequences for construction workers if the city decided to build its transit centre on this site.

"There is potential for explosions should gas collect in confined areas," the report warned, adding that the strong hydrocarbon odour raises the "possibility of workmen collapsing due to the fumes."



Kimery's business, Gunner Mudjacking, is located on the far southern end of the former Imperial refinery property. The Regina Transit Centre and the former Dairy Producers creamery are located closer to the centre of the property. (O'Connor Associates Phase I report)

A second study warned that because the property sits on top of the Regina aquifer, "there is a potential of hydrocarbon contamination migrating deeper into the 'A' Zone of the Regina aquifer." It said part of the Regina aquifer "shows evidence of contamination."

The study found that "at the Imperial Oil site there are possibly three separate leachate plumes evident." A leachate plume is a migrating solution of harmful chemicals.

The study said the plumes appeared to be moving underground and "extend an undetermined distance beyond the boundaries of the aquifers investigated." It noted that the Regina aquifer discharges into the Wascana and Boggy Creeks.

The study recommended additional investigation.

No evidence of aquifer contamination: industry study

The city provided these studies to the Ministry of Environment in June 1986, just as construction on the transit facility was set to begin. That raised concern for the ministry, which asked for additional study.

A follow-up study was conducted by Esso, a division of Imperial, and the ministry said that document cast doubt on the earlier study.

In a 1989 letter to the city of Regina, an Esso official summarized the findings.

"The study determined that the refinery 'has had little or no effect on either aquifers'" the official wrote. "There are no refinery induced plumes ... from the site as initially indicated [by the earlier study]."

The ministry said ground water is regularly monitored and it's satisfied that all the appropriate controls are in place to protect human health and the environment.

Despite the pipes and contamination in the ground and the concerns raised by the studies, documents show the transit centre construction project moved forward rapidly.

According to meeting minutes in the summer of 1986, "the construction plan is to build over what is on the site as much as possible," and "serious contaminated soil was to be spread at the north end of the site." While some contamination was removed, a city memo said "total removal of contaminated soil... is not considered practical."

Controversy between city and ministry

Documents show that the city and the ministry were arguing around this time about who should be taking the lead in assessing and remediating the property.

In a July 1986 letter to the ministry, a Regina official said the city believed that further investigation was required and that work "must consider the entire former refinery and associated areas," because despite all the unknowns, "there appears potential to find a considerable problem."

The official wrote that the city is just one of many property owners on the site and for that reason the province needs to play an active role.

"The city is of the opinion that the senior government and the city should be spearheading future investigations and mitigation action at the Imperial Oil site," he wrote.

An internal City of Regina memo from around that time reported that the province believed this was the city's problem.

"Saskatchewan environment disagrees and expect the city to develop an appropriate program of further investigation on our own property and if we think an expanded program is necessary, to pursue this also on our own," the memo says.

The Ministry of Environment's position doesn't appear to have changed in the 35 years since.

In a recent email, CBC asked the ministry why it was pushing this responsibility on to the city.

The ministry replied that it expected the city and Imperial "to continue to jointly manage and co-operate on future activities at the site."

The ministry appears to have regularly taken this position over the years.

Province says city is responsible

In 2003, an assessment of property that had been owned by Dairy Producers found the land was contaminated in excess of Canadian standards for commercial/industrial land use. Despite that, the report says, "no potentially impacted soil was removed from the site."

The next year, that land was transferred to the Regina food bank.

CBC asked the ministry whether anything was ever done about this contamination and why a food bank and a daycare were allowed operate on this site.

The ministry replied that when contamination exceeds existing standards then additional investigation "is warranted." However, the ministry said it doesn't know if any additional assessment or remediation work was done. A ministry email said it's the city's responsibility to approve land use and development in its jurisdiction.

More recently, in 2016, the city commissioned studies of the area around its transit centre, as it was considering expanding the facility.

One study found elevated levels of benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, xylene and PHC in the ground, and benzene and toluene in the water.

Another study concluded "the extent of PHCs under the transit building was uncertain and as a result vapour barrier and PPE were recommended for construction workers and workers were told not to dig too deep."

The ministry once again told CBC that when standards are exceeded, "additional investigation is warranted." However the province has no idea if that work was ever done.

"There has been no additional site assessment work submitted to the ministry since the 2016 report," the ministry said, once again stating that the city is responsible for all development decisions on its land.

Kimery said he's been at this fight for more than a dozen years and feels he's run out of options.

His lawsuit has stalled. Officials and politicians at the city have become inaccessible.

"I keep getting intercepted by the city solicitor's office telling me that any communications that I do with [politicians or bureaucrats], has to go through their [legal] office," Kimery said.

He hopes that the political pressure that can come from publicity might push politicians to do the right thing and ordering a comprehensive review, even if it comes 45 years too late.

CANADA ONE-STEP CLOSER TO ZERO PLASTIC WASTE BY 2030

Plastic is polluting our rivers, lakes, and oceans, harming wildlife, and generating microplastics in the water we use and drink. Every year, Canadians throw away 3 million tonnes of plastic waste, only 9% of which is recycled, meaning the vast majority of plastics end up in landfills and about 29,000 tonnes finds its way into our natural environment. Canadians expect the Government to take action to protect the environment and to reduce plastic pollution across the country.

Today, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson, announced the next steps in the Government of Canada's plan to achieve zero plastic waste by 2030. The plan will protect wildlife and our waters, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and create jobs.

A key part of the plan is a ban on harmful single-use plastic items where there is evidence that they are found in the environment, are often not recycled, and have readily available alternatives. Based on those criteria, the six items the Government proposes to ban are plastic checkout bags, straws, stir sticks, six-pack rings, cutlery, and food ware made from hard-to-recycle plastics.

This list of items was published today in the discussion paper Proposed Integrated Management Approach to Plastic Products to Prevent Waste and Pollution. This plan also proposes improvements to recover and recycle plastic, so it stays in our economy and out of the environment. The Government of Canada is proposing to establish recycled content requirements in products and packaging. This will drive investment in recycling infrastructure and spur innovation in technology and product design to extend the life of plastic materials.

The Government wants to hear from Canadians and stakeholders on this approach to protect the environment from plastic pollution and reduce waste through a more circular economy. Comments will be accepted until December 9, 2020. Regulations will be finalized by the end of 2021.

The Government of Canada is collaborating with provinces and territories through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment. Together, all federal, provincial and territorial governments agreed to the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste that lays out a vision for a circular economy for plastics, as well as a two-phase action plan that is being jointly implemented. Provinces, territories, and municipalities are leaders in the recovery and recycling of plastic waste. The Government of Canada is continuing to work with them to strengthen existing programs and increase Canada's capacity to reuse and recover more plastics. This will include collaborating with them to develop pan-Canadian targets to ensure that rules are consistent and transparent across the country, and make producers and sellers of plastic products responsible for collecting them.

Minister Wilkinson also took the opportunity to announce over \$2M through the Zero Plastic Waste Initiative for 14 new Canadian-led plastic reduction initiatives. These projects are led by communities, organizations, and institutions, and will promote the development of new and innovative solutions to prevent, capture and remove plastic pollution from the environment.

By improving how we manage plastic waste and investing in innovative solutions, we can reduce 1.8 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions per year and create approximately 42,000 jobs across the country.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the health and safety of Canadians is our highest priority. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has played an important role in keeping Canadians safe, particularly our frontline health care workers. The ban on harmful single-use plastics will not impact access to PPE. The Government of Canada is also working with the provinces and territories, through the Canadian Council of Environment Ministers (CCME), and with the private sector to keep PPE out of our environment.

Quick facts

- On October 10, the Government of Canada will also publish a proposed Order to add "plastic manufactured items" to Schedule 1 of the Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999 (CEPA). This is a necessary regulatory step to managing plastic products.
- CEPA is one of the Government's principal laws for preventing pollution and protecting the environment. CEPA includes tools to address plastic pollution at different stages of the lifecycle of plastic manufactured items, such as manufacture, import, sale, use and disposal.
- The final Science Assessment of Plastic Pollution, which was also published today, evaluates the state of the science and looks at the presence and effects of plastic pollution on the environment and human health. It confirms that plastic pollution is everywhere and is negatively impacting our environment.
- In July 2020, the second and final phase of the Canada-wide Action Plan on Zero Plastic Waste was released. The Plan outlines timelines for tangible, coordinated action to: improve consumer, business and institution awareness; reduce waste and pollution from aquatic activities including fishing and aquaculture; advance science; support prevention, capture, and clean-up of plastic pollution; and contribute to global action.
- In Canada, single-use plastics make up most of plastic litter that is found in freshwater environments.
- In Canada, up to 15 billion plastic bags are used every year and close to 57 million straws are used daily.
- Over 35 countries around the world have already taken action by banning certain single use plastics, including U.K., France, Italy.

INDUSTRY HAS KNOWN FOR DECADES THAT MOST PLASTIC JUST CAN'T BE RECYCLED, SAYS INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST

(Source: CBC News) There has been a decades-long push to get the public to recycle plastic, even though the people behind the idea knew most plastic is too costly and difficult to recycle, says one investigative journalist.

"They have known since the 1970s how difficult and almost impossible it is to recycle the vast majority of plastic," said Laura Sullivan, a three-time Peabody Award-winning investigative correspondent for NPR News.

Sullivan conducted an [in-depth investigation into the recycling industry](#), and said the problem starts with trying to separate the recyclable material from the non-recyclable, which adds to the overall high cost of the process.

"Then, most importantly, the plastic degrades every time you try to reuse it," she told [The Currents](#) Matt Galloway, adding that this means some recycled items cannot be recycled again.

"In one speech, a former industry insider said that it was unlikely that the vast majority of plastic would ever be economically viable to recycle."

Earlier this week, Alberta Premier Jason Kenney announced that the province will work to become a [major plastics recycling hub for western North America](#), as part of his government's new [natural gas strategy](#). The federal government has also announced its intention to [ban six types of single-use plastic by the end of 2021](#), but insisted the move would [support, not hinder, Alberta's plans](#).

Announcing plans to reach zero plastic waste by 2030, [the federal government's website noted](#) that "every year, Canadians throw away 3 million tonnes of plastic waste, only 9% of which is recycled, meaning the vast majority of plastics end up in landfills."

Sullivan's investigation looked at plastic industry records over the last 40 years. She spoke to industry insiders involved in promoting plastic recycling to the general public.

She said that "in the 1990s, plastic was under fire, that people didn't like plastic, there was just too much trash and they needed to do something about it."

"The obvious answer was to recycle it all, but as we know, they knew they couldn't do that," she said.

"It began this campaign to sort of subtly suggest and imply and even outright say, 'You can recycle plastic,' when they knew that wasn't true."

At the time, Sullivan said the industry was hopeful that technology would improve and recycling costs would become more manageable, but that didn't happen.

She said her investigation looked at 12 of the most highly touted projects to increase the amount of plastic being recycled, and found that all of them "fell apart" within five to seven years.

"They were started with great fanfare, they got a ton of publicity ... and then they died quietly."

Conspiracy theory vs. complex system

Christina Seidel, executive director of the Recycling Council of Alberta (RCA), said accusations about the shortcomings of plastic recycling "almost [border] on a conspiracy theory."

"It really just is a complex system that is hard to make work," she said.

According to [its website](#), the RCA's mission is to promote a "circular economy" in Alberta. While in a linear economy, things are made, used and then disposed of, a circular economy "keeps products and materials circulating within the economy at

their highest value for as long as possible, through reuse, recycling, remanufacturing, sharing and delivering products as services," the website says.

Seidel said the organization is exploring a number of options to help to achieve that goal.

One idea is that if they "get the actual producers of the materials more involved in the whole system, they're the ones that actually understand how those plastics are made and how they can be remade," she said.

Sullivan said the people she spoke to were not "conspiracy theorists."

"These are the people who actually ran the program — telling people to recycle in the '90s — [now] saying that they knew that recycling was not going to work," she said.

"That's not a conspiracy theory so much as it is a plan that they had to get out of a crisis of trash."

The Current requested interviews with Canadian oil and plastic industry groups, but no one was made available.

The Chemistry Industry Association of Canada, an industry group for plastic companies, provided a statement saying it is "concerned with the emphasis on banning certain products solely because they are widely used in society and improperly managed at end of use."

The group said it would help the government work toward a circular economy.

Sullivan said the problem is that "the economics don't work now any more than they did 30 years ago."

"It is still cheaper to use virgin oil fresh out of the ground to make plastic than it is to use plastic trash to make plastic," she said.

"No matter what the industry has done, no matter what they have funded, no matter what expensive recycling machines that never made any economic sense ... they cannot get around this fundamental problem."



The Search is on for Canada's Best Community Project: 2021 Community Impact Award

Back in 2017, ECO Canada created the ECO Impact Awards to give back to their community of Environmental Professionals – those that are actively making a difference through their environmental work.

This year, they have created a new award category to recognize community-minded projects that also have a positive environmental impact.

New for the 2021 awards, the **ECO Community Impact Award** was created to recognize positive contributions to the environment around the country. The award will recognize individuals or groups who have displayed a dedication to environmental advocacy, sustainable initiatives, and environmental skill and knowledge development.



Projects that make a difference both environmentally and within communities go a long way to increasing public trust, and promoting sustainable initiatives for the good of those living within the community and its natural areas.

YOU'RE MAKING AN IMPACT! FIND OUT IF YOU'RE ELIGIBLE

The award is open to individuals, groups or organizations to shine a spotlight on a community-minded project with an environmental impact that they have completed or are working towards within the last 18 months.

If you have worked on a project with a larger environmental impact that benefits your region or community, or participated in projects outside of your community to create a positive environmental impact (or you know someone who has), you are encouraged to submit a video nomination.

The award is open to those who have undertaken projects on a voluntary basis – project work receiving financial compensation is ineligible. Projects that received grant or other funding components are encouraged to apply e.g. *non-profit organizations or Indigenous community initiatives.*

EXAMPLES OF ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Community or water-body cleanup projects
- Traditional environmental knowledge-sharing initiatives
- Providing sustainable, clean water solutions & training
- Hosting environmental workshops or other educational programming
- Non-profit waste reduction projects or zero-waste initiatives
- Conservation or habitat management education
- Other projects and initiatives with a clear benefit to the community & environmental sector as a whole

THROW YOUR HAT IN THE RING AND ENTER TO WIN

Nominations are open and encouraged. Please spread the word! ECO Canada would love to hear from organizations or people that are making a real impact within their communities.

Nominees will submit a video showcasing and highlighting the impact of their project.

All video submissions will be reviewed and finalists will be determined by our judging panel. The finalists' videos will then be featured for voting on the Impact Awards website.

Interested in winning the Community Impact Award or learning more? Visit the site to get started. Nominations will close on October 31, 2020. The winner will be announced at the 2021 Impact Awards Learning Series and Gala held online on January 28, 2021.

<https://ecoimpact.ca/community-impact/>

CCME: Project 652-2021 – Climate Change Adaptation Indicators

Project 652-2021– Climate Change Adaptation Indicators

Project Description: The Contractor will develop an inventory of adaptation indicators for pan-Canadian reporting on climate change adaptation, and develop a report on best practices for adopting adaptation indicators.

Closing Date/Time: October 27, 2020 12:00 noon CST

Project Status: Open for competition

[Request for Proposals – 652-2021](#)

[Sample CCME professional services contract](#)

NEW ESAA MEMBER

ESAA's Board of Directors and staff would like to welcome the following new member:

Associate Member:



Defence Construction Canada

Unit 302, 13220 St Albert Trail
Edmonton, AB T5L 4W1

Web: www.dcc-cdc.gc.ca/

Kristoffer Seiler, Regional Service Line Leader, Environment
e-mail: kristoffer.seiler@dcc-cdc.gc.ca

Profile

The principal mandate of Defence Construction Canada (DCC), pursuant to the Defence Production Act, is to meet the infrastructure and environmental needs of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces (DND/CAF) by providing quality services. DCC's mission is to deliver and maintain infrastructure and environmental projects and services, and provide full lifecycle infrastructure support, required for the defence of Canada.

Industry Positions Openings



As a benefit of ESAA Membership, ESAA Members can now post position openings on our website at no charge. Position opening ads also will appear in the newsletter at no charge. For full details visit: <https://www.esaa.org/news/job-board/>

Note: You must still complete the advertising form. After completing the order form, you will receive an email with a link to post your position.

Non-Members are welcome to advertise as well for a nominal charge. Visit [advertising form](#) to place your order.

Job Title	Organization	Application Deadline	Term	Details
Intermediate Environmental Consultant	North Shore Environmental Consultants	2020-10-25	Full-Time	more
Intermediate Environmental Consultant	North Shore Environmental	2020-10-25	Full-Time	more
Project Manager	H3M Environmental Ltd.	2020-10-18	Contract	more

Canada Energy Regulatory Positions

- NEB-07 English: <https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page1800?poster=1502846&toggleLanguage=en>
- NEB-07 French: <https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page1800?poster=1502846&toggleLanguage=fr>
- NEB-09 English: <https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page1800?poster=1503080&toggleLanguage=en>
- NEB-09 French: <https://emploisfp-psjobs.cfp-psc.gc.ca/psrs-srfp/applicant/page1800?poster=1503080&toggleLanguage=fr>



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Comments & submissions are welcome!

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