

Calgary



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Response to Notice of Motion

Open-Pit Mining in the Rocky Mountain Eastern Slopes

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Report UCS2021- 0174
Attachment – verbal only
ISC: Unrestricted

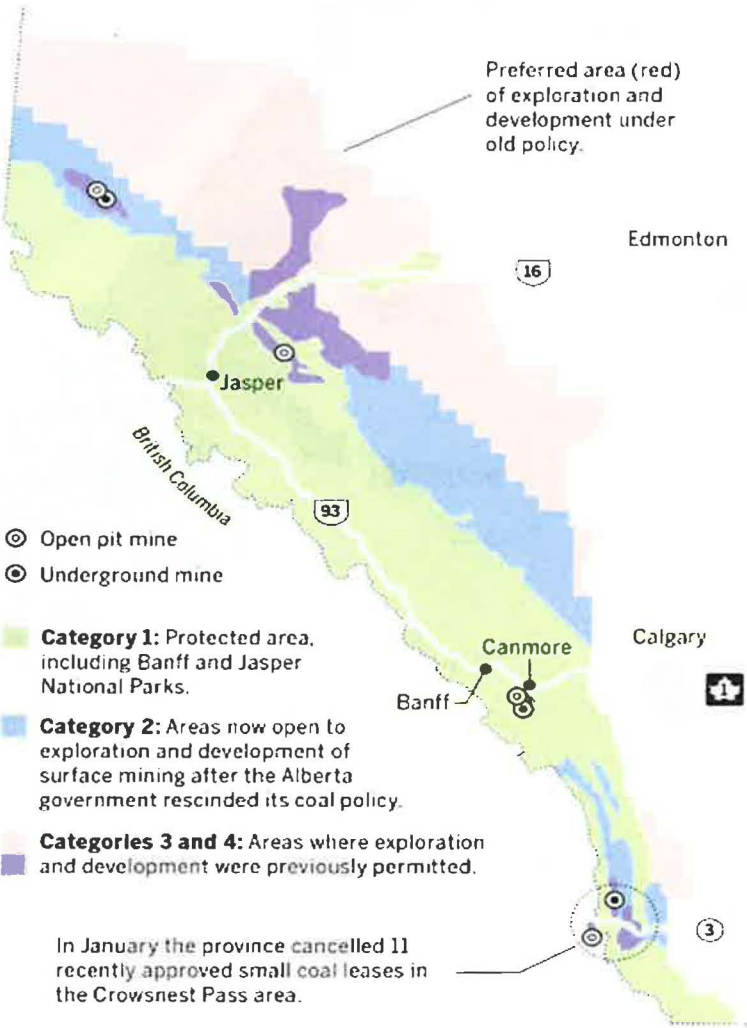


Background

- ☐ A Coal Development Policy for Alberta was issued in 1976 known as the “Coal Policy”
- ☐ On June 1, 2020, the Government of Alberta rescinded the policy
- ☐ Scope of the policy covered coal development process, including exploration rights, coal leases, royalties, prices and marketing
- ☐ The policy also contained four different land use categories delineating the Eastern Slopes of the Rocky Mountains

MINING THE EASTERN SLOPES

Map shows the land classifications established in a 1976 coal-mining policy recently cancelled by the provincial government. Under the old policy, exploration in the blue zone was restricted and surface mining would ‘not normally be considered.’

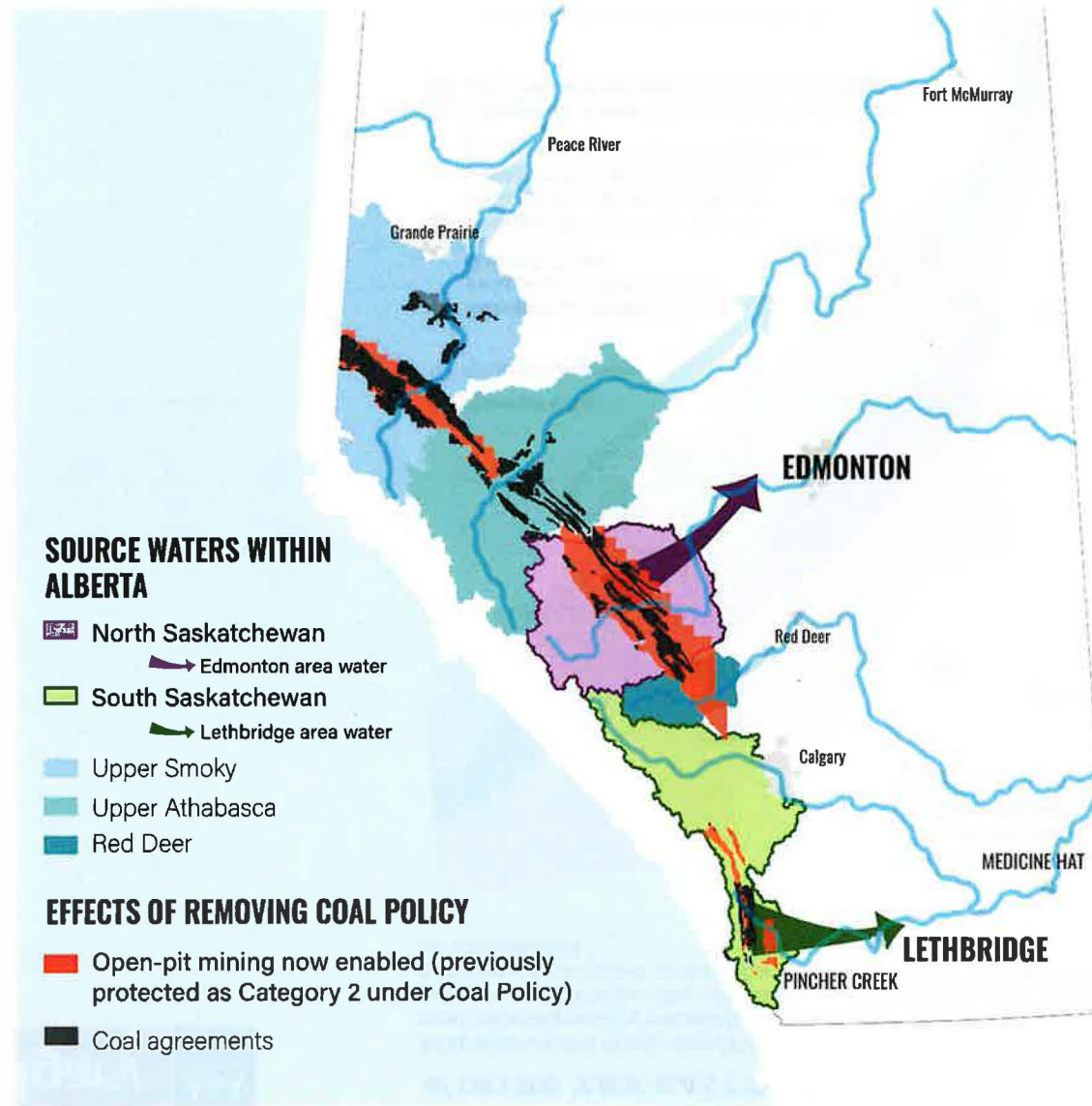


SOURCE: PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

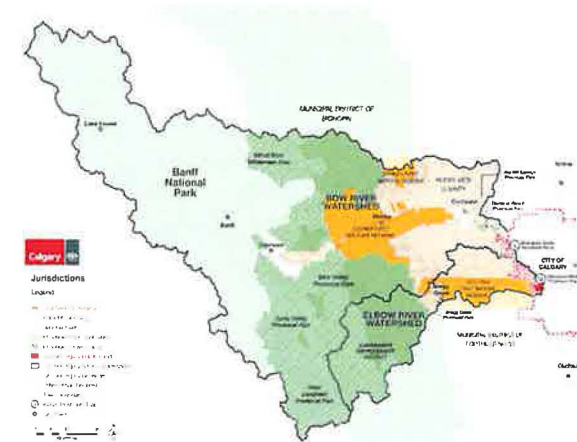
DARREN FRANCEY / POSTMEDIA



Impact on Calgary's Source Watershed



The lands upstream of Calgary's water treatment plants covered by the Coal Policy were identified as Category 1 lands in which no exploration or commercial development will be permitted.



Context of Coal Mining Issues related to Calgary

- ❑ In conjunction with the rescission of the Coal Policy in June 2020, there are several issues related to coal mining currently in the news focusing on Southern Alberta, they include:
 - Application by Province to dismiss a request for a judicial review of the government's decision to rescind the Coal Policy
 - Awaiting the decision
 - Coal Projects
 - Grassy Mtn and others brownfield coal projects
 - Greenfield areas coal leases and exploration permits



Context of Coal Mining Issues related to Calgary

- ❑ Water allocation in the Oldman River Basin – the Province is planning to change the activity designations in the Oldman River basin (increasing allocation for industrial use designation)
 - The Bow basin does not have allocations by designated activity.
 - The Bow River Basin Council (BRBC) is sending a formal request to be consulted by the Province (The City is a member on the board)
- ❑ Water quality/quantity in the Oldman River Basin
 - Oldman Watershed Council has been heavily involved in the water issues related to the coal policy

Watershed Stewardship

“Stewardship means the responsible planning and management of resources. Water stewardship is defined as using water in a way that is socially equitable, environmentally sustainable and economically beneficial. This is achieved through a stakeholder inclusive process that involves site and catchment-based actions.”

- Current changes to the Coal Policy do not pose immediate risks to Calgary’s drinking water quality, The City remains committed to:
 - shared and collaborative watershed stewardship in the South Saskatchewan River Basin.
 - continued work and support with Bow River Basin Council (BRBC), and other South Saskatchewan watershed stakeholders



Imperative of Good Regional Planning

- ☐ The City remains committed to water stewardship through our Source Water Protection Policy (approved by Council in October 2020)
- ☐ Continue to participate in and support collaborative, sustainable regional planning through the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board's growth and servicing plans
- ☐ Work in collaboration with the Province proactively on water management for Calgary and the region
- ☐ Continue to comply with the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRB) and the SSRP Water Management Plan as a key regional planning guidance document

Areas to Continue to Explore

☐ Consultation/Engagement

- How to ensure that The City has a voice at the table in decision-making for both land use and watershed issues planning
- Legal review interpretation where the province can act unilaterally or where there is a duty to consult on potentially significant land use planning decision. Investigate the framework agreement for:
 - City Charter and the MGA.
 - Alberta Land Stewardship Act (ALSA)
 - South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP)

☐ Environmental/Economic/Social/Climate/Reputational Impacts

- More comprehensive review as a result of the Coal Policy rescission.
- Bring together a panel of experts to further discuss



Recommendation

That the SPC on Utilities and Corporate Services (UCS) recommend that Council direct Administration and other experts to make a presentation at the SPC on UCS no later than May 2021 on the Government of Alberta's decision to rescind the 1976 coal-mining policy that had protected the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains – and the headwaters that flow from them.