

They Ain't Making any More of It — Land Lease Considerations for Alberta Renewable Energy Projects

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The advantages of electricity generation from renewable resources are numerous; for the moment at least, sunlight and wind are free for the taking (when they are present), solar and wind projects generate few direct carbon emissions, and the 'fuels' are not depleted through the generation of electricity. At the same time, interest in addressing climate change and renewable energy is surging, with major investment funds announcing they will no longer fund certain hydrocarbon-based investments and address climate change risks of the companies they invest in. It seems that not a week goes by without a major player announcing a commitment to becoming carbon neutral in their operations, and leaders of several large Canadian corporations (including several oil and gas producers) called upon the Federal Government to invest in a 'green recovery' following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although Alberta has traditionally been an oil and gas producing province, renewable electricity has a long, and growing, history here. Canada's first commercial wind farm was installed in 1993 near Pincher Creek, Alberta. As of 2016, Alberta generated 12.3% of its electricity from renewable sources. The World Bank's country factsheet for Canada indicates photovoltaic power potential in the south and eastern portions of Alberta and, with respect to wind energy, significant wind power potential is located in the same area, largely concentrated east of the Rocky Mountains.

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