

Business Plan

2024-25

Ministry of Environment

Saskatchewan! 

Statement from the Minister



*The Honourable Christine Tell
Minister of Environment*

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Environment Business Plan for 2024-25.

The Government of Saskatchewan's vision is for our province to be the best place in Canada to live, work, start a business, get an education, raise a family and build a life. That serves as our guide in developing this business plan. We are fortunate to live in a province with unparalleled quality of life, robust economic opportunities and a commitment to environmental sustainability. This business plan details the ministry's role in bringing the government's vision into measurable goals and actions, aligning with the broader goals outlined in Saskatchewan's Growth Plan.

As Minister of Environment, I am proud of the ministry's commitment in managing the province's environmental health. Supporting sustainable growth through transparent decision-making and stewardship is the ministry's mandate, and they are dedicated to ensuring a healthy and resilient environment for the well-being of Saskatchewan and its people.

Fulfilling Saskatchewan's Growth Plan hinges on environmental health, and the ministry is proud to lead this charge. Through innovative strategies, such as a made-in-Saskatchewan industrial emissions pricing system and sustainable solid waste management, the ministry aims to protect the environment, drive innovation and bolster economic strength.

The provincial economy depends heavily on natural resource industries, emphasizing the importance of a transparent regulatory framework. The ministry's commitment to this involves collaboratively designing regulatory tools, engaging industry partners and working with Indigenous communities to achieve our environmental outcomes.

This business plan highlights key initiatives for the ministry in 2024-25, including the modernization of solid waste regulations, a review of environmental legislation, improvements to the air zone management program, improving the mineral exploration permit process and implementation of a new public inquiry system. Other initiatives include a new forest scaling system, a rapid-deployment air quality station, aerial wildlife population surveillance program, clean electricity grant and targeted testing for chronic wasting disease to help manage the disease in cervids. Each initiative shows the ministry's commitment to sustainability, growth and the well-being of Saskatchewan and its residents.

2024-25 Budget Highlights

1	The ministry's proposed 2024-25 expense budget is \$234.9 million, an increase of 146.5 per cent.
2	\$140 million for clean electricity transition grant to support Saskatchewan's transition to net-zero emissions electricity.
3	Nearly \$5.4 million to support the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund.
4	In support of the Growth Plan goal to double the growth of Saskatchewan's forestry sector, the ministry will spend \$400,000 to continue its work to accelerate the Forest Resource Inventory Project.
5	To improve wildlife population assessments, the ministry will invest \$200,000 for aerial wildlife surveillance.
6	In support of the Critical Minerals and Investment Attraction Strategies, the ministry is investing \$620,000 to improve Crown land management and approval timelines.

Government Vision and Goals

Saskatchewan's Vision

"...to be the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

>> Government Goals

A Strong Economy

Strong Communities

Strong Families

Saskatchewan's vision and three goals provide the strategic direction for organizations to align their programs and services to build a strong Saskatchewan.

All organizations will report on progress in their 2024-25 annual reports.

Ministry of Environment Overview

Mandate

The Ministry of Environment's role is to manage the health of Saskatchewan's environment in a responsible manner that supports sustainable growth through objective, transparent and informed decision-making and stewardship.

Mission

We will manage and protect Saskatchewan's environment for the well-being of the province and its people.

Vision

A healthy, resilient environment.

Goal 1: Safe communities and a healthy environment

Delivering on Saskatchewan's Growth Plan depends on a healthy environment, and the Ministry of Environment is proud to lead that work. Through our commitment to enhance the health of the environment, we are strategically reducing and managing solid waste and ensuring the province is resilient to the effects of climate change. A made-in-Saskatchewan industrial emissions pricing system and a sustainable, integrated solid waste management system tailored to our province's unique needs will protect the environment, increase innovation and help build a stronger economy. Taking a One Health approach to fish and wildlife diseases and a comprehensive view to protecting the environment further demonstrate the ministry's commitment to strong and safe communities.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Coordinate the development and implementation of provincial policies to support sustainable growth and enhance Saskatchewan's overall resilience to the effects of climate change.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Implement the Saskatchewan Technology Fund to support industry-driven technology, innovation, and improvement projects to reduce greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions.
- Explore new technology fund initiatives and funding streams to support projects that lead to the mitigation, sequestration or capture of GHG emissions.
- Continue to expand the Output-Based Performance Standards (OBPS) Program to cover more emissions and regulated emitters.
- Support Saskatchewan's transition to net-zero emissions electricity by directing OBPS Program electricity sector compliance payments towards clean electricity operating expenses in the province.
- Work on building partnerships with academia and research institutions to support the development of new technologies and further genomics research, aiming to improve forest sustainability and resilience.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Implement the Solid Waste Management Strategy to improve the health of Saskatchewan's people and environment, as well as attract investment into the province through new growth opportunities.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Undertake Year 5 review of the Solid Waste Management Strategy to ensure that our approach to solid waste management continues to effectively address environmental concerns and the evolving needs and priorities of communities and stakeholders.
- Explore regulatory options for materials identified in the Canada-Wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility, including expansion of the list of designated products in *The Electronic Equipment Stewardship Regulations*.
- Continue to work with Indigenous Services Canada and the Ministry of Government Relations on the development of northern regional landfills to improve waste diversion and environmental protection.

- Review *The Household Hazardous Waste Product Stewardship Regulations* to ensure the regulations remain up to date.
- Continue to work with other jurisdictions through the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment to implement action plans in support of the Canada-wide Strategy on Zero Plastic Waste.
- Implement the Saskatchewan Environmental Code chapter for composting facilities to protect against adverse effects resulting from improper management at these sites, while simultaneously streamlining requirements and enhancing operational efficiency.
- Develop new regulations and Environmental Code chapters to modernize solid waste management.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Identify, prevent and mitigate risks to human health and safety through comprehensive plans and regulations.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Use the One Health program with the ministries of Agriculture and Health to identify and coordinate responses to emerging fish and wildlife diseases.
- Enhance surveillance for emerging wildlife disease threats as well as disposal of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) infected game in regions where there is an emerging threat.
- Continue to characterize, evaluate risks and develop corrective action plans at priority abandoned non-uranium mine sites. Inspect smaller sites to identify risks.
- Work with Environment and Climate Change Canada and National Air Pollution Surveillance Program to develop a new memorandum of understanding for the continued collaborative agreement between parties.
- Develop a plan to improve the air zone management program and air zone management strategies based on a program review.
- Deploy a new Rapid Air Quality monitoring system to increase the ministry’s year-round capacity to respond to high-priority situations on short notice.
- Enhance processes ensuring persons responsible for impacted sites are held accountable for managing the risks associated with the sites.
- Continue development of new regulatory measures to supersede *The Hazardous Substances and Waste Dangerous Goods Regulations*.
- Continue planning to clean up illegal dump sites in northern Saskatchewan.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Desired Outcome	Measure	Target
Maintain economic growth and protect against carbon leakage (i.e. industry moving production and jobs to other countries with less stringent climate policies).	Number of facilities registered in the OBPS Program.	Increase the number of facilities covered under the OBPS Program by 30 per cent by 2030. In 2024-25, increase the number of facilities covered under the OBPS Program by 5 per cent.

Enhanced resilience to the effects of climate change.	Emissions intensity of Saskatchewan's economy (greenhouse gases per unit of gross domestic product).	Continued decrease in the emission intensity of Saskatchewan's economy.
Reduced waste.	Amount of waste generated in kilograms per capita.	From 2014 levels: 30 per cent reduction by 2030; 50 per cent reduction by 2040.

Goal 2: Sustainable landscapes and wildlife populations that are resilient and biologically diverse

Sustainably growing the province's natural resource economy is a key part of the Saskatchewan Growth Plan. The ministry is working to accomplish this through evidence-based decision-making on land use and environmental impacts. Strategies guide monitoring and response to issues impacting natural resources, including the Habitat Management Plan and the Framework for the Prevention and Management of Invasive Species in Saskatchewan. In collaboration with partners, including Indigenous communities, programs and policies are developed to conserve the province's biodiversity and resilience. These measures will lead to the long-term health of Saskatchewan's natural resources by ensuring their future sustainability.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Conduct and use resilience analysis to optimize Growth Plan objectives and better support evidence-based decision-making on sustainable growth initiatives.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Continue implementing action items identified by the working group for the Framework for the Prevention and Management of Invasive Species in Saskatchewan.
- Continue to collaborate with Alberta Forestry, Parks and Tourism to monitor ongoing survey data addressing risks related to mountain pine beetle and other forest health threats.
- Implement resilience programming, including partnering with ClimateWest to build provincial capacity to adapt and thrive in a changing climate.
- Operationalize resilience analysis and scenario assessment to optimize Growth Plan outcomes.
- Work with forest licensees to develop forest inventories for the Prince Albert and Meadow Lake Timber Supply Areas.
- Finalize and implement the Habitat Management Plan.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Work with our partners to develop and implement programs and policies to protect the province's biodiversity.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Implement a multiple-species approach to managing federally listed critical habitat on Crown land ensuring ongoing engagement with partners and stakeholders to balance habitat management and protection with the objectives outlined in the Growth Plan.
- Establish protected and conserved areas, guided by the made-in-Saskatchewan Protected and Conserved Areas Roadmap and other tools including recognizing working landscapes as protected or as Other Effective area-based Conservation Measures.
- Initiate the review process for *The Wildlife Act, 1998* to modernize the Act with changes that have occurred since its enactment and ensure its relevance and effectiveness in current conservation efforts.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Desired Outcome	Measure	Target
A network of conservation lands.	Total protected areas in Saskatchewan.	By 2025, 7,809,629 hectares (12 per cent) are protected.
Saskatchewan's commercial forests are sustainably harvested and managed.	Annual timber harvest utilization rate (i.e. amount of timber harvested compared to the annual allowable cut).	Support an increase of the annual timber harvest utilization rate to 80 per cent (7 million m ³) by 2030. In 2024-25, support an increase to the annual timber harvest utilization rate to 50 per cent (4.5 million m ³).
Sustainable game populations.	Population status of game species.	Dependent on the game species.
Critical habitats are identified and managed to support continued use by sensitive species.	Distribution of sensitive species.	Continued utilization of critical habitats by sensitive species.

Goal 3: Knowledgeable, compliant and engaged regulated communities

Saskatchewan’s natural resource industries are instrumental to the province’s economic growth. A comprehensive, clear and transparent regulation and enforcement structure ensures industry partners can operate and grow, while also protecting and enhancing environmental outcomes for the province. This is further accomplished by reducing the risk of contamination through compliance assurance activities and working with industry partners to identify impacted sites. Opportunities to increase engagement and involvement with First Nations and Métis communities continue through permitting processes and the ministry’s ongoing commitment to Duty to Consult.

Strategy: *The approach we will take to achieve our goal*

Collaboratively design and implement regulatory tools and processes to enhance environmental outcomes.

Key Actions: *What we will do to get there*

- Continue to review and develop guidance on the ministry’s regulatory and permitting framework to support new and existing partners in developing within the province:
 - Complete and implement recommendations from program review specific to mineral exploration permitting;
 - Formalize review of advanced mineral exploration permitting process; and
 - Develop and implement regulatory policy and guidelines supporting clean technologies for alternative energy and transload facilities.
- Continue the legislative review of *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010* to strengthen protections for Saskatchewan's air, land, and water resources.
- Develop training program and certification process for scalers in the province to support the forest industry.

Performance Measures: *What success looks like*

Outcome	Measure	Target
Regulated communities positively contribute to environmental outcomes.	Percentage of operating landfills requiring groundwater monitoring are doing so.	89 per cent in 2024-25. 100 per cent by 2030.

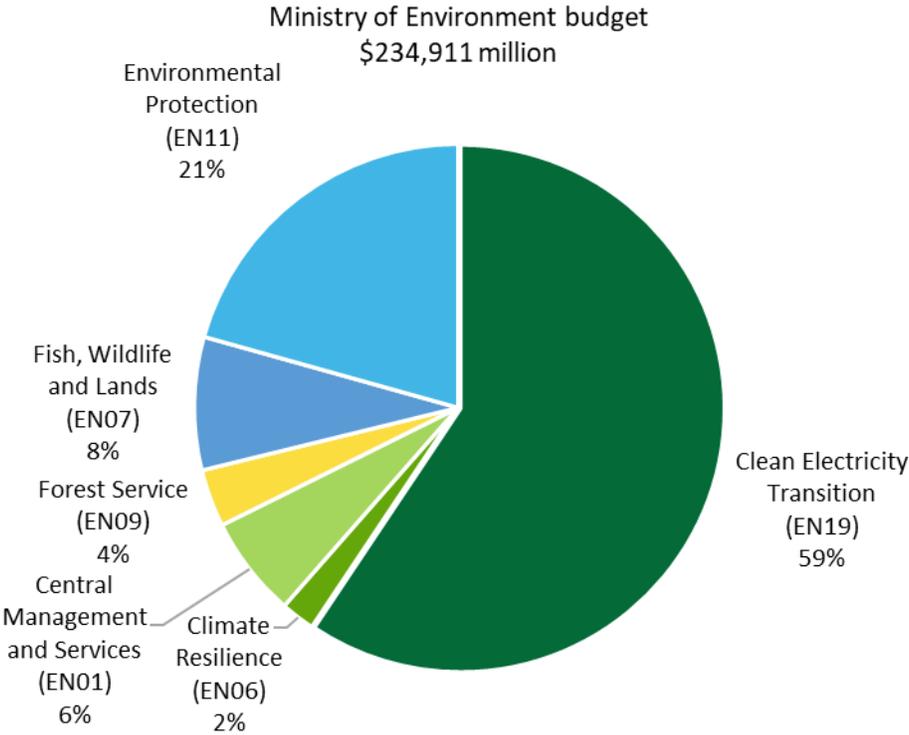
2024-25 Improvement and Innovation Highlights



<p>1</p>	<p><u>Clean Electricity Transition and Emission Reduction Projects</u> The Ministry is amending <i>The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act</i> (MRGHG Act) to support the province’s clean electricity transition. Amending the MRGHG Act will allow the government to use electricity sector compliance payments from the OBPS Program to support ongoing developments and future investments needed to achieve a clean provincial electricity grid by 2050.</p> <p>All other OBPS Program compliance payments from regulated emitters will continue to be deposited into the Saskatchewan Technology Fund for projects that reduce, sequester or capture emissions. The Ministry announced \$25 million to accelerate industry-driven emission reduction projects as part of the Fund’s first intake.</p> <p>Investing in a clean electricity grid and emission reduction projects for industry will help maintain affordability for families and competitive rates for businesses and industry across the province.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p><u>Modernization of the Solid Waste Regulations</u> The 2020 Solid Waste Management Strategy commits to providing a modern, efficient and effective regulatory system for waste disposal and management. To meet that commitment the ministry is reviewing solid waste management regulations to ensure relevance for stakeholders who have identified the need for more guidance for landfill construction, operation and closure. Through a regulatory review, the ministry will draft new regulations and code applying to municipal, private and industrial landfills and replacing <i>The Municipal Refuse Management Regulations</i>.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p><u>Mineral Exploration Permitting Process</u> A program review of the Mineral Exploration Permitting Process was conducted in 2023-24 to address anticipated permitting requirements with the release of <i>Securing the Future: Saskatchewan’s Critical Minerals Strategy</i>. The next step is the implementation of recommendations from the review to support sustainable mineral exploration and other permitting activities on Crown resource lands in Saskatchewan.</p>

Financial Summary

Ministry of Environment 2024-25 Estimates (\$234.911 million)		(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services (EN01)		\$14,615
Climate Resilience (EN06)		\$4,924
Clean Electricity Transition (EN19)		\$140,000
Fish, Wildlife and Lands (EN07)		\$19,238
Forest Service (EN09)		\$8,321
Environmental Protection (EN11)		\$48,727
Total Appropriation		\$235,825
Capital Asset Acquisitions		(\$1,784)
Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment		\$870
Total Expense		\$234,911



Links to More Information

- [Ministry of Environment](#)
- [Government of Saskatchewan Budget, Planning and Reporting](#)