

while at the same time promoting business entrepreneurship, individual liberty, and creativity. Your government will aggressively pursue improvements to ensure we have effective regulations that are both clear and practical. For example, with respect to conventional oil and gas development government's approach will put more focus on assuring compliance with environmental outcomes rather than creating hurdles at the approval stage for companies accessing the land.

We will complete the review of the First Nations consultation policy and guidelines on land management and resource development this year, which will give us another tool to improve competitiveness.

Alberta's agriculture and agrifood industries are key and sustainable economic drivers of our province. We are a responsible producer of safe, high-quality food products that are in demand all over the world, but we need to break into new markets and beat the competition from other countries that export agricultural products, including the United States and Australia. So we will continue efforts to increase our competitive edge, foster value-added opportunities, and increase access to important international markets.

Alberta is now a major global energy player with enormous untapped potential. This sector is vitally important to all Alberta communities, with 50 per cent of our province's gross domestic product tied to energy in some way. Energy development is a partnership between Albertans, who own the resources, and industry, which develops them on Albertans' behalf. It's a partnership that has yielded tremendous benefits in economic activity that touches every corner of our province.

But the best days in Alberta's energy story are yet to come. Your government is committed to ensuring that this industry remains vibrant and continues to attract investment and create new technologies. We have the resources the world needs, including renewable forms of energy, and the know-how to develop them responsibly.

The review of Alberta's competitiveness will point the way and ensure that Alberta is an attractive place to do business. Your government will partner with industry to design the right model to encourage the investment in technology Albertans are known for. All of these initiatives are part of the government's plan to enhance competitiveness. As we lead the way out of the recession, we know there will be tough competition for investment and jobs. Those economies that offer speed, controlled costs, superior innovation, and extraordinary talent will flourish.

We must succeed in maintaining and growing our markets and attracting and developing people and innovation. This is the route to the strong communities, healthy environment, quality of life, and prosperity that we want to pass on to future generations.

Bill 1 of this legislative session, the Alberta Competitiveness Act, will signal our government's resolve to make Alberta the most competitive jurisdiction in North America. To do this, we must minimize the cost of doing business here, including the cost of regulation, while at the same time providing the world-class services that are the hallmark of competitive jurisdictions.

Alberta's next generation economy will see emphasis on attracting new industries in new sectors, serving the world's expanding need for safe food and sustainably produced minerals, forest products, and energy.

We will continue to work on a world-class, integrated petrochemical hub, drawing on the raw materials from the oil sands and adding value before they reach our markets, not afterward. The bitumen royalty in kind policy will accelerate this effort to promote new upgrading opportunities in Alberta.

## A Clean Energy Future

Albertans value our province's environment. To protect our eastern slopes and boreal forest, we will continue to fight the mountain pine beetle.

Alberta's oil sands are the focus of a great deal of world attention. Your government recognizes that customers of our energy are looking for a better understanding of our environmental values and improvements in our environmental management. This is what Albertans want, too. We take great pride in our environment, and we are committed to ensuring that the right policies are in place to address the challenges of being a global energy provider.

Alberta's energy industry has met and exceeded every challenge to limit the impact of oil sands extraction and return the land to a natural state. Our history of technological breakthroughs and engineering excellence will go even further in the future toward shrinking our environmental footprint.

Around the world the drive toward cleaner energy is a fact of our times and a welcome one. The Alberta government and Alberta business leaders have chosen to lead by example in developing the cleaner fuels and clean energy know-how our customers are seeking.

As a result of the international agreement in Copenhagen we will work with the federal government to reach a thoughtful, continental approach to controlling greenhouse gas emissions, one that spurs Alberta-based investment in new technologies and the next generation economy.

While we must develop new opportunities to participate in markets like China and India, our economy will be seriously harmed if access to the U.S. energy market is impaired. Alberta fought hard for free trade, which has proven a boon for our people. We cannot lose those hard-fought advantages. We must secure access to the emerging clean energy market south of the border.

To be competitive in the new global marketplace, we must take a hard look at our own backyard. Albertans value a clean and sustainable environment, but that is not always the perception beyond our borders. Your government will continue to promote Alberta and the amazing technological advances our industries have made in environmental management such as their work on carbon capture and storage, and we will act to improve environmental performance in the oil sands. We will continue to invest in research and technology solutions to the significant environmental challenges posed by oil sands development, including the eventual elimination of tailings ponds.

Energy conservation and renewable sources of energy will become popular economic choices for consumers in the 21st century. Our province has what it takes to succeed in this economic environment, the freedom to create and the spirit to achieve.

These qualities were illustrated recently when 110 Albertans participated in the Solar Decathlon, an international competition hosted by the United States Department of Energy, in which 20 selected teams of university and college students from around the globe competed to design, build, and operate the most attractive, practical, and energy efficient solar-powered home. Team Alberta's home reflected not only the natural landscape of our province but also our values: innovation, excellence in education, and the willingness to meet the energy challenges our world faces head-on. I should mention that Team Alberta placed sixth against the best in the world, an outstanding achievement for its first time in this competition. I should say that project manager Mark Blackwell and representatives of his team are with us today. I would ask that Mark and his fellow solar decathletes rise and receive the warm welcome of the Assembly. Thank you.

Solar  
Decathlon