

Media

to me, Media ▾

Wed, Feb 17, 1:48 PM ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hi Sharon,

Thank you for your patience on this, I picked it up from Tonya as she is away for a few days. Please see our response below:

Surface mining is a generic term that refers to any mining method that starts at the ground's surface and removes the overlying material (overburden) in order to gain access to a mineral deposit (coal seam). Mountaintop removal and open-pit mining are different methods of surface mining. Mountaintop removal completely removes the top of a mountain (overburden) in order to access a targeted coal seam, whereas open-pit mining is more selective in overburden removal practices. Open-pit mines are excavated downwards from the surface in increments referred to as benches. As mining progresses deeper and deeper, each successive bench is moved inwards from the bench above it, forming a pit. The angle of the pit walls are designed to minimize the amount of overburden removal, while ensuring stability during mining operations.

Selecting the appropriate method of surface mining for a particular location relies on many factors, including the local geologic setting, as well as environmental and social considerations. Due to the severe geologic faulting, folding and structural variability in the eastern slopes of the Rockies, the surface coal mines in Alberta's eastern slopes are typically developed using open-pit mining methods.

Thank you,
Kate

From: Sharon J. Riley <sharon@thenarwhal.ca>

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 12:25 PM

To: Media <Media@aer.ca>

Media

to me, Media ▾

Feb 24, 2021, 3:30 PM ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hi Sharon,

Thanks for your patience!

The AER received direction from the Government of Alberta under the reinstated Coal Policy to ensure that coal development on category 2 lands will not involve mountaintop removal. From a quick search of our records, we are not aware of any historic mines, active mines, or applications under review in category 2 lands that fit within the definition of mountaintop removal that we provided to you earlier. We are also not aware of any future projects in category 2 lands that may involve mountaintop removal.

In saying all of that, we understand that regardless of how mountaintop-removal is defined, there is disturbance involved in this type of activity, as with all industrial activity. This recognition is foundational to the AER's review processes and why we follow such a rigorous process, supported by diverse technical experts and input from affected Albertans, to minimize the disturbance and ensure public safety and environmental protection.

Media

to me, Media ▾

Thu, Feb 25, 8:22 AM ☆ ↶

Good morning Sharon,

Thanks for your patience. We have not identified any historical mines in Alberta that meet the definition for mountaintop removal.

Regards,
Kate