



Commission Clarifies Use of Ecologically Suitable Species

The BC Oil and Gas Commission (Commission) is providing further clarity on Section 19 of the [Environmental Protection and Management Regulation](#), which requires restoration of operating areas on Crown land through the use of ecologically suitable species. The use of invasive and persistent, agronomic perennial forage species for reclamation on Crown land is not acceptable. Perennial forage species have been purposefully bred and cultivated to enhance forage production and to invade and persist in native plant communities. Forage species such as crested wheatgrass, sweet-clover, timothy, smooth brome, creeping red fescue, and reed canary grass (among others) can reduce plant community diversity and hinder natural revegetation processes.

Exceptions may include:

- Temporary use of annual cover species (such as fall rye and winter wheat) to assist with soil stabilization and reduce erosion potential in the short term.
- Operating areas on or immediately adjacent to land that is cultivated for agricultural purposes.
- Operating areas located on range developments that are improved pasture cultivated, seeded or otherwise improved for forage production and the revegetation species are consistent with those improvements.
- Extenuating conditions preventing the successful replacement of topsoil or the establishment of ecologically suitable species.

Requirements to restore operating areas under section 19 are intended to promote re-establishment of vegetation communities ecologically relevant to the surrounding conditions and not hinder the benefits of natural revegetation processes. While the use of native and non-native seed mixes, including certain grasses, may be effective at stabilizing soils and reducing weeds, research shows persistent and competitive species often hinder natural revegetation processes. The specific conditions (moisture and nutrient regimes) of the site once re-contouring and soil replacement has occurred are critical considerations when selecting an ecologically suitable species mix to promote natural succession relevant to the surrounding ecology.

The Commission is engaged in ongoing discussions with industry and First Nations to enhance clarity on the expectations of reclamation practices and standards. In addition, the Commission encourages proponents to engage with local Indigenous nations when developing reclamation plans and selecting suitable seedlings and seed mixes.

If you have any questions regarding this Industry Bulletin, please contact:

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