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Province Delays Surface Coal Mining Projects

Department of Natural Resources

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The province is extending the deadline for consideration of 13 potential surface coal mining projects for another three years.

The original deadline, announced in April 2006, was intended to provide Pioneer Coal Ltd. with time to demonstrate the environmental impacts and the nature of reclamation from the mining initiative.

"We fully support the economic benefits of coal mining," said Minister of Natural Resources Carolyn Bolivar-Getson. "We are pleased with the progress of the Point Aconi project on Boularderie Island and with the responsible manner in which this project has been operated."

Pioneer Coal has been operating its Point Aconi mine since August 2007. As part of that approval, the minister of natural resources announced that no further surface coal projects in the old Devco lease area would be approved for three years. During that time there was an assessment of initial reclamation at the Pioneer operation, and an initiative to study ways of improving vegetative growth at reclaimed former coal mine sites took place.

"The initiative, which involved scientists from the provincial government and several Nova Scotia universities, including Cape Breton University, has provided valuable information on how to better encourage re-vegetation of reclaimed sites," said Ms. Bolivar-Getson. "However, we still need more time to fully evaluate these results so we can take full advantage of valuable lessons that will benefit all Nova Scotians as we move forward."

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