

July 27, 2004

INFORMATION LETTER 2004-18

Subject: New Ammonite Shell Regulation and Lifting of Moratorium on Agreements

This information letter provides an overview of the recent changes to the *Ammonite Shell Regulation* and describes how Alberta government policies guiding the management of ammonite shell will be changing in the future.

The *Ammonite Shell Regulation* was approved through Order-in-Council 318/2004 on July 14, 2004 and comes into effect immediately. This regulation replaces the 1989 regulation of the same name.

The amendments to the regulation were developed following consultations with amateur and commercial ammonite shell collectors, miners, landowners, the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology and a number of government agencies.

The highlights of the regulation changes are:

- The requirement for collectors to hold permits has been eliminated from the regulation. Individuals no longer need to have a permit in order to collect exposed ammonite shell.
- Ammonite shell agreements may now be issued to an applicant prior to obtaining a *Historical Resources Act (HRA)* exemption for the property. Under the former regulation the HRA exemption was required before the agreement would be issued. The agreement holder now has four months after the agreement has been issued to obtain the HRA exemption from Alberta Community Development. The HRA exemption must be held for the duration of the agreement or the agreement may be cancelled.
- The renewal term of agreements has been shortened to five years from 15 years. This is being done to accommodate a policy change related to freehold minerals, discussed below.

In association with the amendments to the regulation, Alberta Energy will be changing its policies with respect to the lands that are available for ammonite shell agreements. Alberta Energy will now accept applications only on lands where the Alberta Crown owns the minerals. Applications for ammonite shell will no longer be accepted on lands that have a freehold mineral title.

A number of ammonite shell agreements were previously issued on lands that have freehold mineral titles. These agreements will be renewed at expiry for a further five-year term, but will not be renewed a second time.

The existing moratorium on new applications for ammonite shell agreements is being lifted. All applications currently being held by the department will be processed immediately. Any applications falling on freehold title lands will be rejected.

Effective September 15, 2004 the department will start accepting applications for new agreements. A map showing existing ammonite shell agreements and freehold lands will be available in mid-August on the Alberta Energy's website: www.energy.gov.ab.ca.

Ammonite collectors should note the collection of ammonite or any other fossils is subject to the provisions of the *Historical Resources Act*. Any questions about the rules governing the collecting and owning of fossils should be directed to Dan Spivak (phone 403-823-7707) at the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology. Collectors should also note that before entering upon occupied land, they must obtain permission from the landowner or occupant.

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