



## Background Information on CASA and Airshed Zones

The Clean Air Strategic Alliance (CASA) has shared responsibility with the province of Alberta for strategic planning of air quality management. CASA stakeholders have developed a Comprehensive Air Quality Management System (CAMS) that supports multi-stakeholder collaborative, consensus<sup>1</sup> based decisions. The CAMS model promotes open communication between stakeholders as well as good will and credibility through voluntary multi-stakeholder involvement in local air quality issues.

Many of Alberta's air quality issues are local, both in their cause and the solutions required. In these cases, province-wide approaches to address these issues may be inappropriate and inefficient. An airshed zone can enable local stakeholders to design local solutions to address local air quality issues. Airshed zones are guided by local multi-stakeholder non-profit societies who use the CASA consensus model to make decisions. These societies work within a designated geographic area to monitor, analyze, and report on air quality. In addition, these societies can also recommend or implement actions on their own to improve air quality within that zone.

Airshed zones involved in air quality management may also develop plans to deal with air quality concerns in their region. The management system should consider related problems within the zone as well as in adjacent areas, and should be flexible enough to meet the needs of all stakeholders. In some cases, provincial management frameworks anticipate that zones could participate in planning and developing responses to the particular air quality issues the framework was designed to address. An example is the Particulate Matter and Ozone Management Framework.

There are currently seven CASA endorsed airshed zones in operation in the province of Alberta. They are:

- West Central Airshed Society (WCAS): established in 1995
- Wood Buffalo Environmental Association (WBEA): established 1997
- Fort Air Partnership (FAP): established 1997
- Parkland Airshed Management Zone (PAMZ): established in 1998
- Peace AirShed Zone Association (PASZA): established in 2001
- Palliser Airshed Society (PAS): established in 2004
- Lakeland Industry & Community Association (LICA): endorsed by CASA in 2005

There are new airshed zones undergoing development in the Edmonton region (Alberta Central Airshed Society) and the Calgary Region (Calgary Region Airshed Zone).

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<sup>1</sup> Consensus Decision Making: A process in which all those who have a stake in the outcome aim to reach agreement on actions and outcomes that resolve or advance issues related to environmental, social, and economic sustainability



**calgary health region**  
**Southeast Community Portfolio**

**Environmental Health  
Risk Assessment & Management**  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 1509 Centre Street SW  
Calgary, Alberta Canada T2G 2E6  
Telephone: (403) 943-8060  
Facsimile: (403) 943-8056

The ongoing operations of an airshed zone, including fund raising and budget setting, is also managed by the airshed zone society. The primary source of funding for an airshed zone typically comes from the major emitters in the zone through the reallocation of resources (e.g. the collapse of compliance monitoring into the airshed zone and other environmental spending). These funders can include industries and municipalities where the specific allocation of dollars for each funder is arrived at through a funding formula. Substantial funding is also potentially available from Alberta Environment (AENV) for the operation of specific air quality (AQ) monitoring stations at the amount of \$50,000 for each AENV or National Air Pollution Surveillance (NAPS) network monitoring station located within the airshed zone. For example, in the Calgary Health Region there are 3 AQ monitoring stations that could qualify for funding from AENV. Contributions from other agencies (e.g. health regions, NGOs) are usually in the form of in-kind support. Participation in the airshed zone is on a voluntary basis, and this also promotes trust and good will with the greater community.

There are four basic phases to establishing an airshed zone:

1. Feasibility Assessment
2. Development of the airshed zone
3. Implementation of the airshed zone
4. Ongoing Operation of the monitoring network

For more information on airshed zones and CASA, please visit the CASA website at [www.casahome.org](http://www.casahome.org).