COAL EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT
POTENTIAL SOUTHERN CANADIAN 
ROCKY MOUNTAINS

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The Mesozoic strata of the southern Canadian Rockies extending from the Canmore corridor to the United States border contains vast coal resources. Presently five coal
mines situated within southeastern British Columbia produce more than twelve million tonnes per year.

The coal bearing Kootenay Group is part of an eastward thinning clastic sedimentary sequence resulting from uplift of the Columbian Orogen. Depositional environments include beach-dune, coastal plain, alluvial plain and alluvial fans which create local correlation and mining problems.

The Kootenay Group displays numerous structural styles; from relatively undeformed west-dipping thrust sheets to highly contorted, folded and faulted, synclinal and anticlinal blocks. The five producing mines have been developed to take advantage of near surface exposures and structural thickening of the coal seams.

The southern Rocky Mountain area has produced coal for more than 80 years. Its greatest asset is the existing infrastructure including long time coal mining people, towns and railways. Production capability from existing facilities is currently 14 million tonnes per year with at least seven new and expansion projects proposed which could increase output a further 15 million tonnes per year.

The coals of the Kootenay Group are highly marketable as both thermal and metallurgical products with a great range of rank are possible. Developments in the future include thermal power generation utilizing new coal deposits where the coal is not economical for export sales or at existing facilities where vast quantities of coarse refuse material is produced. Proven mineable reserves are 1.2 billion tonnes in the Crowsnest and adjacent coalfields, while total inferred coal reserves are 25 billion tonnes.