AGENDA

REGULAR MEETING OF PICTURE BUTTE TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Monday, December 16th, 2024 at 6:30 pm

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

2.0 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3.0 ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

3.1 Regular Council Meeting Minutes – November 25th, 2024

4.0 PUBLIC HEARING

4.1

5.0 DELEGATION

5.1 St/Sgt. Mike Numan – R.C.M.P.

6.0 REQUESTS FOR DECISION

6.1 RFD Returning Officer
6.2 RFD 2025-2027 Interim Operating & Capital Budget
6.3 Town of Coalhurst – Regional Meeting Request
6.4

7.0 MAYOR'S REPORT

8.0 COUNCIL'S REPORT

9.0 ADMINISTRATION'S REPORT

9.1 Emergency Services Report

10.0 CORRESPONDENCE

10.1

11.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

11.1 Food Cycle – Report Cards
11.2 Oldman River Regional Services Commission – Christmas Card
11.3 Barons-Eureka-Warner Family & Community Support Services – Board meeting minutes – November, 2024
11.4 Office of the Minister – Successful application to the Community Facility Enhancement Program Grant

12.0 CLOSED SESSION

12.1 FOIP Act Division 2 Section 16 – Municipal Development Plan Costs
12.2 FOIP Act Division 2 Section 16 – Tax incentive bylaw
12.3 FOIP Act Division 2 Section 27 - Legal

13.0 ADJOURNMENT

MINUTES
OF THE
PICTURE BUTTE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
HELD IN
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
Monday, November 25th, 2024 AT 6:30 PM

PRESENT: Mayor C. Moore, Deputy Mayor C. Papworth, Councillor T. Feist, Councillor H. de Kok, Councillor C. Neels

ALSO PRESENT: Chief Administrative Officer – K. Davis
Director of Corporate Services – M. Overbeeke
Municipal Enforcement Officer – R. Mosby
Administrative Assistant – C. Johnson

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Moore called the Regular Council Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2.0 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

379 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor de Kok that the agenda be approved as presented.

CARRIED

3.0 ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES

3.1 Regular Council Meeting – November 12th, 2024

380 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor Feist that the Regular Council Meeting minutes of November 12th, 2024 be approved as presented.

CARRIED

4.0 PUBLIC HEARING – Aggressive Dog Appeal Hearing

Municipal Enforcement Officer, Ryan Mosby, spoke to the Aggressive Dog Classification Appeal case. Monty Cahoon was issued a warning that an Aggressive Dog Classification could be imposed in February 2024 after the first incident was reported. Two more incidents were reported in September. At that time the Aggressive Dog Order was issued and conditions were imposed on Mr. Cahoon that included a shorter lead, not leaving the dog unattended when outside the home and to pay an aggressive dog license fee ($150). This fee was later reduced by Council to $75 for 2024.

4.1 Submissions

4.1.1 In Person Submissions

4.1.1.1 Ask for Those in Favour

Cheryl Garrat, one of the complainants, was present at the meeting to speak in favour of the Aggressive Dog Order.

Marilyn Cortez, one of the complainants, was present at the meeting to speak in favour of the Aggressive Dog Order.

Wayne Hawthorne, one of the complainants, was present at the meeting to speak in favour of the Aggressive Dog Order.

4.1.1.2 Ask for Those Opposed

Monty Cahoon and Alex Hann, the defendants, spoke in opposition of the Aggressive Dog Order.

4.1.2 Written Submissions

4.1.2.1 Ask for Those in Favour

Marilyn Cortez submitted a letter in favour of the Aggressive Dog Order giving details to her encounters with Mr. Cahoon's dog.

Wayne Hawthorne submitted a letter in favour of the Aggressive Dog Order outlining the need to keep the Community safe.

4.1.2.2 Ask for Those Opposed

Fawn Van Schothorst submitted a letter opposed to the Aggressive Dog Order outlining her non-aggressive run-ins with Mr. Cahoon's dog.

4.2 Adjourn the Public Hearing

Mayor Moore adjourned the Aggressive Dog Classification Appeal Hearing at 7:11 p.m.

R. Mosby left the meeting at 7:11 p.m.

5.0 DELEGATION

5.1 Maddy From – Food Cycle Science

Food Cycle Science is a Canadian company that focuses on food waste diversion services with Municipal partnerships. Household waste is composed of 25-50% of organic waste. That organic waste is 90% liquid mass and can be heavy in the trash. Organic waste also produces methane, which is 25 times more harmful than CO2. Reducing food waste means less collection and fewer trips to the collection site. In areas with animals, reducing food waste can deter animals from going through the garbage. Green bins are used in larger centres but have a major capital expenditure to process and collect the food waste. Contamination and participation rates are an ongoing issue. Backyard composting can be an option for those that have the space and expertise but can attract pests and animals. The Food Cycler is able to reduce food waste by 90%. The by-product is a dry, sterile, odourless & nutrient-rich fertilizer. The Food Cycler promotes increased awareness to food waste and how the environmental impact of the waste. The pilot programs have been very successful with 98% participation rates and 96% recommendation rates. On average each household throws out 40 less bags of garbage each year when composting with the Food Cycler.

The pilot program is 12 weeks long. Residents will purchase the Food Cycler from the Municipality as a subsidized cost and use it for a period of 12 weeks. At the end of the period, the residents will provide their review of the product and a brief survey. The information gathered can be used in future organic waste diversion programs. Council agreed that this program sounded promising and

381 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor Neels to direct Administration to have Food Cycle Science present the food waste presentation to the Lethbridge Regional Waste Management Commission.

CARRIED

6.0 REQUESTS FOR DECISION

6.1 Council Meeting Schedule

382 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor Feist to cancel the December 9th and 23rd Regular Council meetings; cancel the December 16th Committee of the Whole meeting; schedule a Regular Council meeting on December 16th.

CARRIED

6.2 Town Centennial Celebration

383 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor Feist to declare 1926 as the date that Picture Butte was settled.

CARRIED

7.0 MAYOR'S REPORT

7.1 Mayor's Report

November 18 Attended a Committee of the Whole meeting
November 19 Attended a virtual meeting with Minister Dreeshen's team
November 19 Attended a Lobbying for Piyami Lodge rebuild meeting

384 2411 25 MOVED by Mayor Moore that the Mayor's Report be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

8.0 COUNCIL'S REPORT

8.1 Council's Report

Councillor Feist advised Council of her recent activities:
November 18 Attended a Committee of the Whole meeting
November 21 Attended a Picture Butte History Committee meeting

Councillor de Kok advised Council of his recent activities:
November 18 Attended a Committee of the Whole meeting
November 20 Attended a SouthGrow Economic Development webinar

Deputy Mayor Papworth advised Council of her recent activities:
November 18 Attended a Committee of the Whole meeting
November 19 Attended a Lobbying for Piyami Lodge rebuild meeting
November 21 Attended a Picture Butte History Committee meeting
November 22 Attended a Green Acres Executive Board meeting

Councillor Neels advised Council of her recent activities:
November 16 Attended the Chinook Arch Library Extravaganza
November 18 Attended a Committee of the Whole meeting
November 19 Attended Picture Butte Library Board meeting
November 20 Attended a SouthGrow Economic Development webinar

385 2411 25 MOVED by Deputy Mayor Papworth that the Council Reports be accepted as presented.

CARRIED

9.0 ADMINISTRATION'S REPORT

9.1 CAO Report

386 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor Neels to accept the CAO Report as presented.

CARRIED

9.1.1 Director of Parks and Recreation Report

387 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor Neels to accept the Director of Parks and Recreation Report as presented.

CARRIED

388 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor de Kok to direct Administration to organize a meeting of the Intermunicipal Development Committee.

CARRIED

10.0 CORRESPONDENCE

10.1 SouthGrow – Letter of Support Request

389 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor de Kok to receive and file SouthGrow - Letter of Support Request.

CARRIED

10.2 Alberta Irrigation Districts Association Letter re: Provincial Water Availability Engagement

390 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor de Kok to receive and file Alberta Irrigation Districts Association Letter re: Provincial Water Availability Engagement.

CARRIED

11.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

11.1 Shaughnessy Community Association – Thank you
11.2 Oldman River Regional Services Commission – Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – October 2024

391 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor Feist to receive and file Informational Items 11.1 - 11.2.

CARRIED

12.0 CLOSED SESSION

12.1 FOIP Act Division 2 Section 20 – Aggressive Dog Classification Appeal
12.2 FOIP Act Division 2 Section 22 - CUPE and Town of Picture Butte Memorandum of Settlement

392 2411 25 MOVED by Deputy Mayor Papworth to close the meeting to the public in accordance with Division 2 Section 20 & 22 of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act to discuss Aggressive Dog Classification Appeal and CUPE and Town of Picture Butte Memorandum of Settlement at 8:10 p.m.

CARRIED

393 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor Feist to open the meeting to the public at 8:51 p.m.

CARRIED

394 2411 25 MOVED by Deputy Mayor Papworth that the Aggressive Dog Order for Milo, the Schnauzer dog owned by Monty Cahoon, be upheld until September 2025, whereupon the Aggressive Dog order will be reassessed. Further, that the $200 appeal fee be applied to the 2024 and 2025 Aggressive Dog licence fees (2024 - $75, 2025 - $150) and to waive the remaining, outstanding amount of $25.

CARRIED

C. Johnson left the meeting at 8:32 p.m.

395 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor de Kok to accept the CUPE and Town of Picture Butte Memorandum of Settlement with the exception of section 17.01(h).

CARRIED

13.0 ADJOURNMENT

The next Regular Council Meeting is scheduled for December 16th, 2024 beginning at 6:30 p.m.

396 2411 25 MOVED by Councillor Neels that the Regular Council Meeting adjourn at 9:00 p.m.

CARRIED

Cathy Moore
Mayor

Keith Davis
Chief Administrative Officer

November 12, 2024

Keith Davis
CAO – Town of Picture Butte, Alberta.

Dear Mr. Davis,

Please find attached the quarterly Community Policing Report attached that covers the July 1st to September 30th, 2024 reporting period. The attached report serves to provide a quarterly snapshot of human resources, financial data, and crime statistics for the Picture Butte Detachment.

This quarter I want to update you on the status of the Body Worn Camera (BWC) rollout, which will be starting this month. We will be conducting Province-wide media releases in mid-November that will include a demonstration of the new BWC along with an update on the Alberta RCMP deployment plan. As the deployment of BWCs to each detachment will take approximately 12-18 months, I will reach out to inform you of when you are expected to receive it. Shortly before the deployment of BWCs in our communities, I will also ensure there is communication locally so that residents are aware of this new piece of equipment being used by our officers.

I also want to let you know about the RCMP Public Consultation Tool that is anticipated to be launched in early 2025. This initiative is being launched in order to solicit feedback from RCMP stakeholders with the goal of increasing transparency in policing and contribute to our vision of becoming an inherently open RCMP. This public consultation tool will be secure and confidential for all participants who will remain anonymous. I encourage your engagement in this process and if you would like more information, you can contact the Open Government Office at EnterpriseTransparency-Transparenceauseindelorganisation@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

I always remain available to discuss your community-identified policing priorities and/or any ideas you may have that will enhance our service delivery to address the priorities that are important to you. As the Chief of Police for your community, I invite you to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

S/Sgt. Mike Numan
Chief of Police
Coaldale-Picture Butte RCMP Detachment

Alberta RCMP - Provincial Policing Report

Detachment Information

Detachment Name
Picture Butte

Detachment Commander
S/Sgt. Mike Numan

Report Date	Fiscal Year	Quarter
November 12, 2024	2024-25	Q2 (July - September)

Community Priorities

Priority #1: Traffic - Safety (motor vehicles, roads)

Updates and Comments:
There was a notable increase in traffic enforcement during this quarter due to enhanced proactive patrols by the membership. There were 2 IRs suspensions issued during this quarter. Due to resource issues, there were no JFO's completed during this quarter. We anticipate the shortfall will be made up over the holiday season with some joint check stops initiatives planned.

Priority #2: Police / Community Relations - Police Visibility

Updates and Comments:
There were 8-foot patrols completed during this quarter as well as two bike patrols in the rural areas. Also, this quarter was very successful for community events and interactions as we recorded 46 events again. We are far exceeding this target and have great relationships with all our communities. The Detachment is well on its way to meeting our Detachment proactive policing target for the year.

Priority #3: Intelligence led policing - Crime prevention

Updates and Comments:
Coaldale RCMP continues to participate in monthly intelligence sharing meetings with SAD-CRU, local RCMP, and local Municipal Police Services. This networking of information continues to aid in the tracking and charging of prolific offenders that consistently cross jurisdictional lines. Coaldale RCMP

continues to participate in the high-risk youth crown meetings at LPS, but have not attended any meetings over the summer. Meetings will continue in the upcoming quarter. This quarter has seen officers attend resource fairs to educate the public and are back liaising with schools at the start of the school year.

Community Consultations

Consultation #1

Date	Meeting Type
August 17, 2024	Community Connection
Topics Discussed	
Picture Butte Jamboree Days	
Notes/Comments:	
RCMP members lead Jamboree Days Parade and had a presence in the community during the entire weekend for the event. Lots of interaction with youth and parents that was well received.	

Consultation #2

Date	Meeting Type
September 9, 2024	Meeting with Elected Officials
Topics Discussed	
Regular Reporting/Information Sharing; Youth	
Notes/Comments:	
Detachment Member attended the Picture Butte town council meeting to provide a report on Quarter 1 crime statistics. Provided update and answer questions and inquiries. Great conversation and positive meeting.	

Consultation #3

Date	Meeting Type
September 26, 2024	Community Connection
Topics Discussed	
Education Session; Regular Reporting/Information Sharing	
Notes/Comments:	
Two members attended the Picture Butte High School for the Community Resource Fair. We had a table and handed out resource materials, answered questions, and took part in general conversations with the community. Our table had approximately 30 people attend. Very positive and great initiative.	

Crime Statistics

The following table provides policing statistics on actual offences within the periods listed. Please see the Appendix for additional information and a five-year comparison.

Category	July - September			January - December		
	2023	2024	% Change YoY	2022	2023	% Change YoY
Total Criminal Code	94	36	- 62%	303	257	- 15%
Persons Crime	26	3	- 88%	59	57	- 3%
Property Crime	51	25	- 51%	171	163	- 5%
Other Criminal Code	17	8	- 53%	73	37	- 49%
Drugs Offences	0	0	N/A	1	0	- 100%
Total Federal Acts	2	1	- 50%	4	3	-25%
Total Provincial Acts [4]	21	16	- 24%	108	78	- 28%
Municipal By-Laws	2	5	+ 150%	13	5	- 62%
Motor Vehicle Collisions	25	11	- 56%	106	112	+ 6%
Total Traffic Offences	56	36	- 36%	371	276	- 26%
Provincial Code Traffic	53	36	- 32%	367	269	- 27%
Criminal Code Traffic	2	0	- 100%	3	5	+ 67%
Other Traffic	1	0	- 100%	1	2	+ 100%

Notes:

1. Data is extracted from a live database (PROS) and is subject to change over time.
2. Statistics for the July - September period reflect RCMP records as of October 8, 2024.
3. Full-year statistics reflect RCMP records as of January 5, 2024.
4. "Total Provincial Acts" include records of non-offence activities that are undertaken by Detachment members, in addition to actual offences under various provincial acts. Non-offence activities may include activities under the *Mental Health Act*, *Coroners Act*, and other provincial legislation in Alberta.

Trends / Points of Interest

Coaldale-Picture Butte Detachment members continue to do an excellent job dealing with our habitual offenders this past quarter which has resulted in a decrease almost all categories above. We will continue to work with our partner agencies and crime reduction teams to target these repeat offenders. We will continue to have a strong presence in the community and surrounding rural areas.

Provincial Service Composition

Staffing Category	Established Positions	Working	Soft Vacancies	Hard Vacancies
Regular Members	5	3	2	0
Detachment Support	2	2	0	0

Notes:

1. Data extracted on September 27, 2024 and is subject to change.
2. Soft Vacancies are positions that are filled but vacant due to maternity/paternity leave, medical leave, etc. and are still included in the overall FTE count.
3. Hard Vacancies reflect positions that do not have an employee attached and need to be filled.

Comments:
Police Officers: Of the five established positions, three officers are currently working. There are three officers on special leave (three Medical leave) and one of these positions is backfilled to ensure coverage. There is one position with two officers assigned to that position. There is no hard vacancy at this time.

Detachment Support: Of the two established positions, two resources are currently working with none on special leave. There is no hard vacancy at this time.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Picture Butte Provincial Detachment
Crime Statistics (Actual)
July to September: 2020 - 2024

All categories contain "Attempted" and/or "Completed"

October 8, 2024

CATEGORY	Trend	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2020 - 2024	% Change 2023 - 2024	Avg File +/- per Year
Drug Enforcement - Production		0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0.0
Drug Enforcement - Possession		1	0	1	0	0	-100%	N/A	-0.2
Drug Enforcement - Trafficking		0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0.0
Drug Enforcement - Other		1	0	0	0	0	-100%	N/A	-0.2
Total Drugs		**2**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**-100%**	**N/A**	**-0.4**
Cannabis Enforcement		0	1	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	-0.1
Federal - General		3	1	2	2	1	-67%	-50%	-0.3
TOTAL FEDERAL		**5**	**2**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**-80%**	**-50%**	**-0.8**
Liquor Act		0	1	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	-0.1
Cannabis Act		0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0.0
Mental Health Act		11	9	7	9	7	-36%	-22%	-0.8
Other Provincial Stats		23	21	18	12	9	-61%	-25%	-3.7
Total Provincial Stats		**34**	**31**	**26**	**21**	**16**	**-53%**	**-24%**	**-4.6**
Municipal By-laws Traffic		3	0	2	0	0	-100%	N/A	-0.6
Municipal By-laws		2	8	3	2	5	150%	150%	0.0
Total Municipal		**5**	**8**	**5**	**2**	**5**	**0%**	**150%**	**-0.6**
Fatals		0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0.0
Injury MVC		8	3	4	5	1	-88%	-80%	-1.2
Property Damage MVC (Reportable)		17	15	18	19	6	-65%	-68%	-1.8
Property Damage MVC (Non Reportable)		3	1	3	1	4	33%	300%	0.2
TOTAL MVC		**28**	**19**	**25**	**25**	**11**	**-61%**	**-56%**	**-2.8**
Roadside Suspension - Alcohol (Prov)		0	1	1	1	0	N/A	-100%	0.0
Roadside Suspension - Drugs (Prov)		0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0.0
Total Provincial Traffic		**282**	**187**	**100**	**53**	**36**	**-87%**	**-32%**	**-62.6**
Other Traffic		**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**-100%**	**-100%**	**-0.1**
Criminal Code Traffic		**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**-100%**	**-100%**	**-0.1**
Common Police Activities									
False Alarms		**4**	**8**	**10**	**6**	**1**	**-75%**	**-83%**	**-0.8**
False/Abandoned 911 Call and 911 Act		**22**	**22**	**23**	**27**	**18**	**-18%**	**-33%**	**-0.3**
Suspicious Person/Vehicle/Property		**26**	**16**	**15**	**17**	**11**	**-58%**	**-35%**	**-2.9**
Persons Reported Missing		**3**	**3**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**-67%**	**N/A**	**-0.7**
Search Warrants		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**0.0**
Spousal Abuse - Survey Code (Reported)		**9**	**7**	**9**	**14**	**3**	**-67%**	**-79%**	**-0.5**
Form 10 (MHA) (Reported)		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**N/A**	**N/A**	**0.0**

Picture Butte Provincial Detachment
Crime Statistics (Actual)
July to September: 2020 - 2024

All categories contain "Attempted" and/or "Completed"

October 8, 2024

CATEGORY	Trend	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	% Change 2020 - 2024	% Change 2023 - 2024	Avg File +/- per Year
Offences Related to Death		0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0.0
Robbery		0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0.0
Sexual Assaults		2	1	1	4	0	-100%	-100%	-0.1
Other Sexual Offences		1	0	0	1	0	-100%	-100%	-0.1
Assault		7	6	4	17	2	-71%	-88%	0.1
Kidnapping/Hostage/Abduction		1	0	0	0	0	-100%	N/A	-0.2
Extortion		0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0.0
Criminal Harassment		4	3	3	3	0	-100%	-100%	-0.8
Uttering Threats		5	5	5	1	1	-80%	0%	-1.2
TOTAL PERSONS		**20**	**15**	**13**	**26**	**3**	**-85%**	**-88%**	**-2.3**
Break & Enter		5	7	8	14	0	-100%	-100%	-0.3
Theft of Motor Vehicle		4	19	10	8	4	0%	-50%	-1.1
Theft Over $5,000		4	1	0	2	0	-100%	-100%	-0.7
Theft Under $5,000		21	20	12	4	5	-76%	25%	-4.8
Possn Stn Goods		2	5	4	3	7	250%	133%	0.8
Fraud		6	4	7	7	3	-50%	-57%	-0.3
Arson		0	1	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	-0.1
Mischief - Damage To Property		11	7	9	4	2	-82%	-50%	-2.1
Mischief - Other		5	9	5	9	4	-20%	-56%	-0.2
TOTAL PROPERTY		**58**	**73**	**55**	**51**	**25**	**-57%**	**-51%**	**-8.8**
Offensive Weapons		2	1	0	3	0	-100%	-100%	-0.2
Disturbing the peace		11	3	7	8	3	-73%	-63%	-1.1
Fail to Comply & Breaches		9	4	7	2	2	-78%	0%	-1.6
OTHER CRIMINAL CODE		2	3	4	4	3	50%	-25%	0.3
TOTAL OTHER CRIMINAL CODE		**24**	**11**	**18**	**17**	**8**	**-67%**	**-53%**	**-2.6**
TOTAL CRIMINAL CODE		102	99	86	94	36	-65%	-62%	-13.7

REQUEST FOR DECISION

Our Vision: *Picture Butte is the Community of Choice to work, live and play in Lethbridge County*

Our Mission: *Picture Butte is a thriving community dedicated to serving our people through fiscal responsibility and transparency.*

Date: December 09, 2024
To: Mayor, Council
From: Director of Corporate Services

Re: Returning Officer

Background:

The Returning Officer is responsible to do all necessary tasks to conduct an election. They will give notice of election, give notice of nominations, receive nominations, supply of the voting station, declare acclamations, delivery of ballots, ballot boxes, instructions to electors and other necessary supplies to the voting station.

Recommendation Options:

1) **THAT** Council appoint Michelle Overbeeke as the Returning Officer and Keith Davis as the Deputy Returning Officer.

Submitted by:
Michelle Overbeeke, CPA CMA
Director of Corporate Services

Request for Decision

Our Vision: *Providing sustainable growth that results in a safe, vibrant and inclusive community while embracing our heritage.*
Our Mission: *By serving Picture Butte, Town Council will continually strive to ensure a thriving and vibrant community that improves the lives of Town Residents.*

Date: 16 December, 2024
To: Mayor, Council
From: Director of Corporate Services

Re: 2025-2027 Interim Operating Budget

Background:

The 2024 - 2026 budget was approved at the March 3, 2024 regular Council meeting.

The 2025 budget presentations will occur February 2025. The 2025 – 2027 budget will be passed in March 2025. The budget information will be brought back when we have confirmation of assessment and requisitions so that the mill rate can be set for the year.

With the 2024 – 2026 already being approved by Council we can use this information for the interim 2025 budget information that is already in place.

Recommendation:

That Council approve, or give direction to amend the 2025 interim operating & capital budget that was originally approved March 3, 2024 with the understanding that changes will be made in February 2025 when the new budget is presented to Council.

Submitted by:
Michelle Overbeeke, CPA CMA
Director of Corporate Services

Town of Coalhurst

November 28, 2024

Mayor and Council
Town of Picture Butte
120 4 Street North
Picture Butte, Alberta

Via email: keith@picturebutte.ca

Subject: Regional Council Workshop Invitation

Dear Mayor Moore and Council:

The Town of Coalhurst Council would like to warmly invite the Town of Picture Butte Council and other small-municipality councils and CAOs in the region to an informal workshop, to discuss common issues and goals. We believe this networking opportunity will help strengthen our relationships, affirm our regional priorities, and allow us to shape our collective voice, thereby strengthening our advocacy efforts.

We propose a mutually convenient Wednesday to discuss matters over dinner that Coalhurst will host from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. on any of the following dates in the new year:

- January 15, 22, or 29
- February 5, 12, 19, or 26

Once a date has been confirmed, we will select a venue to host our gathering which will likely be in Coalhurst or Lethbridge, depending on attendance numbers. We ask that you please provide us with your top three preferred dates from the bullets above, ranking them in preference from first to third. We recognize the challenges of choosing a date that works for most and will do our best to accommodate everyone so that this important event can occur.

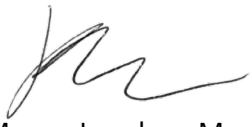
We also welcome your municipality to submit agenda items that your Council would like to discuss. A proposed agenda with Coalhurst's suggested agenda items is included in this letter for your consideration.

In addition, we recognize the authority of decision making that each Council has and accordingly suggest that this workshop be focused on discussing matters and finding common ground and initiatives that support us all. Any final decisions would be made by a

motion of your Council following the workshop. Processes and parameters for future intergovernmental meetings can be discussed and formalized at the first meeting.

We ask that you please respond by no later than Friday, December 20th including the number of attendees expected, so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Sincerely,



Mayor Lyndsay Montina
Town of Coalhurst

cc: Coalhurst Town Council
Karlene Betteridge, Chief Administrative Officer, Coalhurst
Lethbridge County Council
Barons Village Council
Nobleford Town Council

North of the Oldman River
Intergovernmental Workshop

Proposed Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Land acknowledgement statement
3. Welcome and roundtable introductions
4. Procedures and parameters
5. Intergovernmental matters and projects for consideration
    a. A local regional economic development initiative
    b. Regional projects
        i. Pathway
        ii. Cemeteries
    c. Regional advocacy
        i. Physician and general practitioner attraction and retention
        ii. Highschool or educational matters
        iii. Piyami Lodge
    d. Cost sharing agreements between municipalities
    e. Garbage services
    f. Intermunicipal public transportation
6. Joint advocacy efforts with the provincial government
7. Adjournment

Memorandum

Our Vision: *Picture Butte is the Community of Choice to work, live and play in Lethbridge County.*

Our Mission: *Picture Butte is a thriving community dedicated to serving our people through fiscal responsibility and transparency.*

Date: December 13, 2024
To: Mayor, Council
From: Director of Emergency Services

RE: Emergency Services Report – November 2024

Year-to-Date Emergency Events (Jan-Nov)							
Fire			Medical		Motor Vehicle Collisions		Total
Town	County	Other	Town	Other	Town	County	
25	79	12	287	523	4	23	**953**

Fire Services

Fire crews responded to 23 events in November including 2 motor vehicle collisions, 1 alarms, 3 structure fires, 4 tender assists, 1 vehicle fire and 11 medical emergencies. We had three of our members complete their basic technical rescue training in November after passing the NFPA 1006 Technical Rescue Awareness course on November 9th. Then, on November 10, 2024 our Technical Rescue Team was called to assist Coaldale & District Emergency Services with removing a patient involved in a vehicle rollover in the coulees.

Our Technical Rescue Team members putting their rope training to work in the coulees!

Emergency Medical Services

Our EMS crews responded to 43 medical events in November. On November 19, 2024 we received notification from Accreditation Canada that we successful in maintaining our Accredited status. I would like to again congratulate our staff on the hard work in maintaining our commitment to quality improvement with accreditation.

Bylaw Services

Officer Mosby performs regular daily patrols of Picture Butte to actively monitor for bylaw compliance. Bylaw Services has been engaged in summer enforcement activities including weeds, unsightly properties, trailer parking, and campground patrols. There are currently 4 of the 10 allocated Urban Hen Licenses issued in town.

2024 Bylaw Enforcement Files					
	September	**October**	**November**	**Year-to-date Totals**	**Trend** *Compared to 2023
Dog Control Bylaw	3	2	7	43 files	93% (46) →
Traffic Bylaw	10	8	7	65 files	104% (62) →
Noise Bylaw	-	1	-	1 file	100% (1) →
Unsightly Premises Bylaw	4	1	36	138 files	191% (72) ↗
Public Information	1	1	3	10 files	77% (13) ↘
Business License Bylaw	-	-	-	12 files	109% (11) →
Animal Regulation	-	-	-	1 file	100% (1) →
Fire Protection Bylaw	-	-	-	1 file	200% (0) ↗
Utility Bylaw	-	-	-	-	0% (1) →
Land Use Bylaw	-	-	-	-	0% (1) →
Urban Hen Bylaw	1	-	-	7 files	47% (15) ↘
Parks & Campground Bylaw	2	4	-	13 files	*New
Total	**21 files**	**17 files**	**53 files**	**300 files**	**135% (223)** ↗
Development Files	**9 files**	**18 files**	**10 files**	**179 files**	**158% (113)** ↗

Emergency Management

Lethbridge County has hired Brea Tamminga for the position of Regional Emergency Management Coordinator. The next steps for the Regional Emergency Management project involving finalizing our Regional Emergency Management Plan and through the Regional Coordinator organizing the governance meetings of the Regional Emergency Advisory Committee and operational trainings with the Regional Emergency Management Agency.

Submitted by: Frank West, *Director of Emergency Services*

ACCREDITATION
AGRÉMENT
CANADA

November 19, 2024

Keith Davis
Chief Administrative Officer
Picture Butte Emergency Services
120 4th Street N., P.O. Box 670
Picture Butte, Albera T0K 1V0

Subject: **Award - Your October 2024 Survey**

Dear Keith Davis:

The Accreditation Decision Committee (ADC) has granted Picture Butte Emergency Services the award of **Accredited** under the Qmentum accreditation program. Your accreditation report can be found on your client organization portal. This is a milestone to be celebrated, and we congratulate you and your team for your commitment to providing safe, high quality health services.

However, submission of evidence for designated unmet criteria and Required Organizational Practices (ROPs) is required within specified timelines to maintain your status. The lists below provide details on the unmet criteria which require further evidence from your organization. Please submit the requested evidence of compliance via your Quality Performance Roadmap located on the client organization portal by **May 26, 2025.**

Required Organizational Practices (ROPs) Tests for Compliance Requiring Follow-up:

- Leadership Standards for Small, Community-Based Organizations (10.9.1), (14.1.4), (14.4.1), (14.4.2), (14.10.1), (14.10.2), (14.10.3)

Criteria Requiring Follow-up:

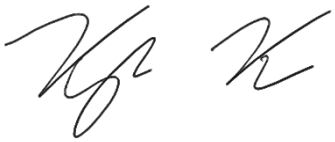
- Leadership Standards for Small, Community-Based Organizations (3.4)

Once you have submitted the evidence, we may request more information from your organization to complete the review. You will receive a decision letter within thirty (30) business days from the evidence submission due date.

We at Accreditation Canada are pleased to work with you on your quality improvement efforts and look forward to continuing to provide you with guidance and support.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your next steps, feel free to contact Bozena Michalik, Client Engagement Coordinator, at 1-647-264-1327, or by email at bozena.michalik@accreditation.ca.

Sincerely,



Kyle Kemp, PhD
Chair, Accreditation Decision Committee

c.c.: Captain Justin Chronik, EMS Team Lead
Frank West, Fire Chief

FOODCYCLER

DRAYTON VALLEY

FoodCycler™ Pilot

Congratulations on completing a successful 12-week FoodCycler Pilot Program! Drayton Valley is among the 120+ municipal partners that have implemented the FoodCycler as a trusted food waste solution and shown its commitment to a sustainable future.

There were

100 participating households in Drayton Valley

4.5 Star Average Rating

What you diverted

18.9 metric tonnes of CO_2 emissions diverted per year

WITH THIS AMOUNT OF C02E DIVERTED, YOU TAKE THE EQUIVALENT OF

4.2 gasoline-powered vehicles off the road annually

14.5 metric tonnes of food waste diverted per year

WITH THIS AMOUNT OF WASTE DIVERTED, YOU ARE SAVING

15.3 garbage bags per household annually. Your local landfill thanks you!

What Your Neighbours Say

99% will continue to use their FoodCycler

90% would recommend a FoodCycler to others

78% are now more aware of their food waste

> After using the unit, I could not believe how much waste previously went into the garbage
>
> – RESIDENT

> I will continue to use this machine past the pilot program. The machine is simple and stress free. It was a very easy transition from my previous routine
>
> – RESIDENT

Interested in purchasing a FoodCycler for your home?

Visit: https://www.draytonvalley.ca/foodcycler-pilot-project/

FOODCYCLER

FoodCycler™ Pilot

Congratulations on completing a successful FoodCycler Pilot Program! The Township of North Kawarth is among the 150+ municipal partners that have implemented the FoodCycler as a trusted food waste solution and shown its commitment to a sustainable future.

There were

200 participating households in the Township of North Kawartha's pilot program.

4.7 Star Average Rating

★★★★★

What you diverted

71.95 metric tonnes of CO_2 emissions diverted per year

THIS IS THE EQUIVALENT TO THE CARBON SEQUESTERED BY

84 acres of forest each year!

55.35 metric tonnes of food waste diverted per year

WITH THIS AMOUNT OF WASTE DIVERTED, YOU ARE SAVING

20.26 garbage bags per household annually. Your local landfill thanks you!

What Your Neighbours Say

99% will continue to use their FoodCycler

96% would recommend a FoodCycler to others

68% are now more motivated to waste less food.

> "This has been great. We could not compost due to attracting bears, etc., but now we can and spread it on our gardens. Thanks for the opportunity."
>
> – RESIDENT

> "Wonderful for keeping smelly waste out of the garbage do we don't have animal issues with our garbage pick up!
>
> – RESIDENT

> "I would highly recommend the FoodCycler. We are a water-access cottage with lots of family and friends and this greatly reduced the green waste that we brought to the landfill - reduced by 100%.
>
> – RESIDENT

Interested in purchasing a FoodCycler for your home?

Reach out to your municipality for more information!

FOODCYCLER

FoodCycler™ Pilot

Congratulations on completing a successful 12-week FoodCycler Pilot Program! Ritchot is among the 150 municipal partners that have implemented the FoodCycler as a trusted food waste solution and shown its commitment to a sustainable future.

There were

100 participating households in the Ritchot pilot program.

4.7 Star Average Rating

What you diverted

34.4 metric tonnes of CO_2 emissions diverted per year

THIS IS THE EQUIVALENT TO THE CARBON SEQUESTERED BY

40.2 acres of forest each year!

26.5 metric tonnes of food waste diverted per year

WITH THIS AMOUNT OF WASTE DIVERTED, YOU ARE SAVING

41.6 garbage bags per household annually. Your local landfill thanks you!

What Your Neighbours Say

100% will continue to use their FoodCycler

92% would recommend a FoodCycler to others

78% are now more aware of their food waste

> We love our FoodCycler and use it very often. It feels great not putting all that waste into the garbage and we've reduced our garbage by at least half. – RESIDENT

> "Really love it and will continue to regularly use! So thankful for this program!" – RESIDENT

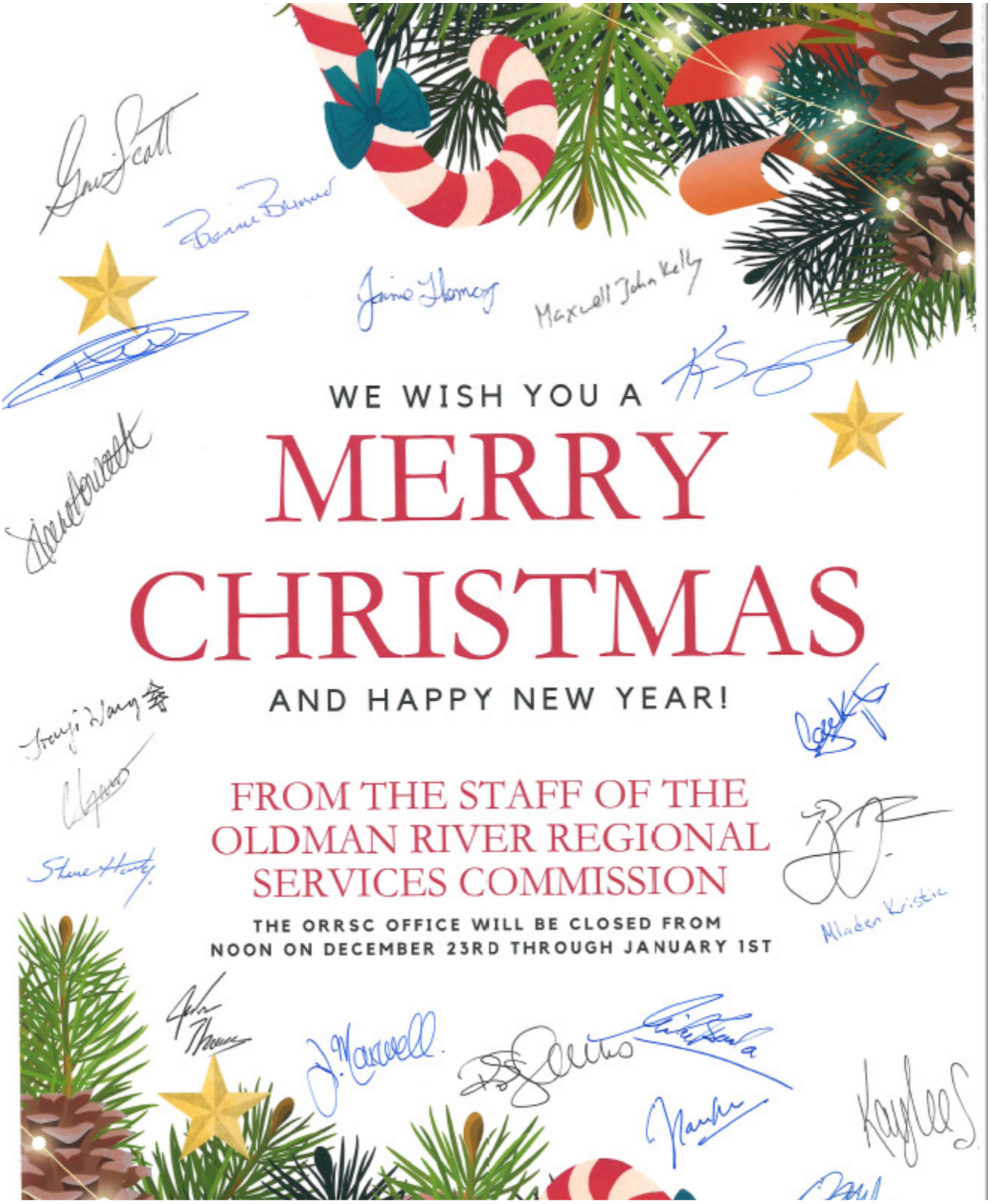
> A great initiative. Appreciated learning and participating. Thanks to all those at the RM for offering this opportunity at a reduced rate." – RESIDENT

Interested in purchasing a FoodCycler for your home?

Reach out to your municipality to request participation in future pilot rounds.

Keith Davis

From: ORRSC Administration <admin@orrsc.com>
Sent: Friday, November 29, 2024 8:59 AM
Subject: Merry Christmas & Happy New Year From ORRSC!



Barons-Eureka-Warner Family & Community Support Services (FCSS)
Minutes of Board Meeting – Wednesday, November 6, 2024
Coaldale Hub (2107-13th Street)
In-person and Online

Attendance (in-person)

Degenstein, Dave – Town of Milk River, Board Chair
Bekkering, Garth – Town of Taber
Doell, Daniel – Village of Barons
Feist, Teresa - Town of Picture Butte
Jensen, Kelly – Town of Raymond
Kirby, Martin – Village of Warner
Nilsson, Larry – Village of Stirling

Attendance (online)

Forchuk, Marilyn – Town of Vauxhall
Payne, Megan – Village of Coutts
Caldwell, Heather – Town of Coalhurst
Jensen, Melissa – Town of Nobleford

Absent – Board Members

Heggie, Jack – County of Warner
Foster, Missy – Village of Barnwell
Hickey, Lorne – Lethbridge County
Harris, Merrill – M.D. of Taber
Chapman, Bill – Town of Coaldale, Vice-Chair

Staff (in-person):

Morrison, Zakk – Executive Director
DeBow, Petra – Manager
Florence-Greene, Evelyn – Accounting Assistant
Hashizume, Linda – Executive Assistant

Call to Order

Z. Morrison called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Board introductions were made.

Elections

Z. Morrison called for nominations for the position of Chairperson.

M. Payne nominated D. Degenstein for the position of Chairperson.

K. Jensen entered the Board Meeting at 4:07

Z. Morrison called a second time for nominations for the position of Chairperson.

Z. Morrison called a third time for nominations for the position of Chairperson.

D. Degenstein accepted the nomination.

G. Bekkering moved nominations cease. L. Nilsson seconded the motion.
Carried Unanimously

D. Degenstein was acclaimed to the position of Chairperson.

D. Degenstein called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairperson.

D. Degenstein nominated B. Chapman for the position of Vice-Chairperson.

D. Degenstein called a second time for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairperson.

D. Degenstein called a third time for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairperson.

G. Bekkering moved nominations cease. T. Feist seconded the motion.
Carried Unanimously

B. Chapman was acclaimed to the position of Vice-Chairperson.

Approval of Agenda

L. Nilsson moved the Board approve the agenda as presented.
Carried Unanimously

Dates of Regular Meetings

The Board members discussed the monthly date for 2024-2025 regular Board meetings.

T. Feist moved the Board meetings to be held the first Wednesday of the month, excluding the months of January, July, and August at 4:00 p.m.
Carried Unanimously

Z. Morrison discussed Annual Agenda Items for 2024-2025 Board meetings.

M. Payne moved the Board accept the Annual Agenda Items as presented for information.
Carried Unanimously

Minutes

K. Jensen moved the minutes of October 2, 2024, FCSS Board meeting be approved as presented.
Carried Unanimously

Correspondence

The following correspondence was presented for information:

- 2024-09 FCSSAA News.
- Resolutions for FCSSAA AGM 2024.
- FCSS Community Impact Tool FAQ's.
- 2024-10 FCSSAA News.
- 2024-10-10 Village of Barons – Daniel Doell appointment to the FCSS Board (2024-2025).
- 2024-10-23 MD of Taber – Merrill Harris appointment to the FCSS Board (2024-2025).
- 2024-10-25 Lethbridge County – Lorne Hickey appointment to the FCSS Board (2024-2025).

D. Doell moved the Board to receive the correspondence as presented for information.
Carried Unanimously

Reports

Executive Director

Z. Morrison reviewed the Executive Director's report.

The following was highlighted:

- Z. Morrison was nominated by the Directors' Network for the FCSSAA Board of Directors as a Director Representative.
- FCSS programming space in Barons has moved from the United Church to the Seniors' Drop-in Centre.
- **November** is Family Violence Prevention Month, which means it is a time to raise awareness and have an open conversation about family and domestic violence. Visit: https://fcss.ca/monthly-message/family-violence-prevention-month/

G. Bekkering moved the Board to approve the Executive Director's Report as presented.
Carried Unanimously

Financial Report

Z. Morrison reviewed the Financial Report.

The Board discussed the Financial Report.

L. Nilsson moved the Board to approve the November 2024 Financial Report including:

- Financial statement for September 30, 2024;
- Monthly accounts for September 1-30, 2024;
- ATB Mastercard statement – September 13 to October 10, 2024

Carried Unanimously

New Business

Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA) Conference 2024

Z. Morrison discussed the annual FCSSAA Conference which will be held November 13-15, 2024.

The Board discussed that the attending Board Members can vote at will as voting delegates at the FCSSAA AGM.

G. Bekkering moved the Board send B. Chapman, M. Kirby, D. Degenstein, and H. Caldwell attend the FCSSAA Conference naming D. Doell as an alternate.
Carried Unanimously

T. Feist moved the Board appoint D. Degenstein and M. Kirby as the voting delegates for the 2024 FCSSAA AGM.
Carried Unanimously

The Board tabled the Municipal Requisition 2025 discussion till the December 4th, 2025, Board meeting.

Round Table

The Board shared municipal updates.

Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next regular Board meeting will be December 4th, 2024, at the Coaldale HUB (2107 – 13th St.) in person and online (via Teams) starting at 4:00pm.

Adjournment

K. Jensen moved the meeting to adjourn at 5:00 p.m.
Carried Unanimously

Chairperson

04 DEC 24
Date

Executive Director

Dec 4/2024
Date

ALBERTA
ARTS, CULTURE AND
STATUS OF WOMEN

Office of the Minister

John Kolk
Chairperson
Picture Butte "Walk on the Wild Side" Society
PO Box 670
Picture Butte AB
T0K 1V0

Dear John Kolk

RE: Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP) Small Grant

I am happy to advise that your Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP) Small Application No. CFEP-00122124 to assist the Picture Butte "Walk on the Wild Side" Society with site construction for the CPR Trail has been approved for $91,000. An electronic transfer of funds will be sent to your bank account in the coming weeks, and notification will follow.

As the Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women, I am extremely honoured to support the work of non-profit organizations that aim to foster healthy, vibrant communities across Alberta. The Government of Alberta is proud to support organizations that improve the quality of life in our communities.

Acceptance and use of the grant funds will confirm your agreement with the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreement in your application. The final reporting templates are available on the Alberta Arts, Culture and Status of Women website at alberta.ca/community-facility-enhancement-program-small.

Please note that you will be required to file a statement of accounting and final report upon project completion, or within 18 months of the payment date. If you have any questions, please contact program administration at 1-800-642-3855.

I wish you continued success with your important work.

Sincerely,

Honourable Tanya Fir
Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women

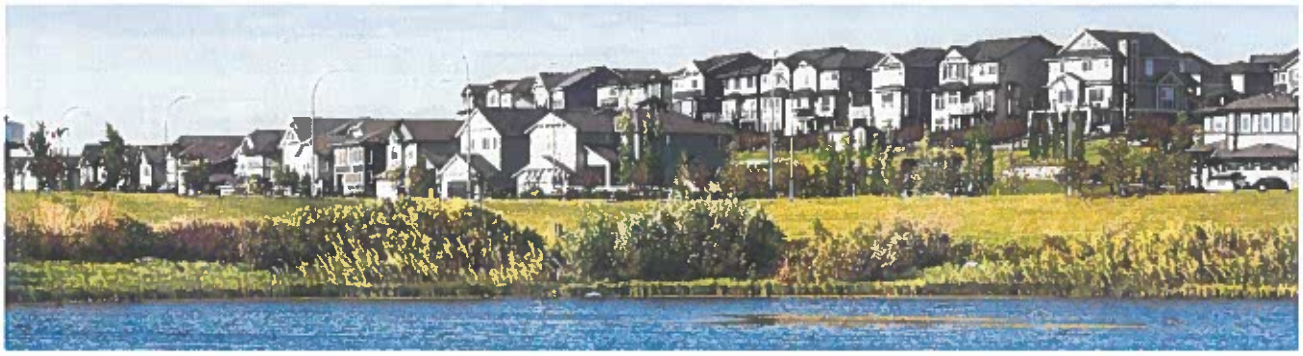
cc: Honourable Joseph Schow, MLA
Cardston-Siksika

Room 132 Legislature Building, 10800 - 97 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6 Canada Telephone 780-422-3559

AR 60193

Alternative Water Sources and Wastewater Reuse

Water Availability Engagement



Population growth, economic growth and water variability are challenging the water management system in Alberta. New policy and regulatory tools could be used to increase water availability for Albertans and optimize the water management system to better address these issues while continuing to protect the aquatic environment.

This document provides background information on just one type of water management opportunity identified through conversations with stakeholders. It is intended to spark ideas and generate conversation.

The Government of Alberta invites your feedback on any opportunity to increase water availability in the province.

Enabling use of alternative water sources

For most of Alberta's history, water supply and availability and our water licensing system was focused on allocating the readily available, natural water sources in the environment such as rivers, creeks, lakes, groundwater aquifers, or wetlands.

Alternate water sources include:

- Stormwater
- Collected rainwater
- Collected household greywater
- Wastewater reuse
- Industrial process-affected water reuse
- Landfill leachate reuse
- Hydraulic fracturing flowback fluid reuse

Most alternative water sources are sources not supplied from fresh surface water or groundwater in the environment. Wastewater and stormwater form the majority of alternative water sources of most interest for use in Alberta. Other alternative sources include rainwater and greywater. The use of these sources can augment our existing water supplies while providing environmental and economic benefits.

Stormwater is a use – not a reuse – of water. Since it's recognized as a water source, stormwater needs a water licence. In southern Alberta where some basins are closed, this means a licence transfer from an existing licensee is needed. This makes it costly and often infeasible as a potential source, even if it is otherwise practical or attractive.

An advantage of water reuse over accessing natural water supplies is that, in many cases, less water is being taken directly from the environment. Additionally, because the water does not necessarily have to be of high quality (i.e. potable) for certain uses, less energy and fewer inputs are required in treatment processes; this concept is often referred to as 'fit for purpose'.

A fit for purpose approach – matching water quality source to end use – saves energy by reducing treatment requirements. This concept encourages use of the lowest quality water necessary, while posing the least risk to the user, the public and the environment.

Alberta

To address the potential human health and environmental risks associated with exposure to wastewater and stormwater, water reuse projects include implementing controls to minimize these risks.

What is return flow?

The term "return flow" is not defined in the *Water Act* or its regulations. In Alberta's system of water licensing and water management, return flow considerations are important in how water is licensed for use. Reusing water or wastewater usually refers to a licencee wanting to use water for a second time rather than release it back into the environment (i.e. return flow). This creates a challenge since the returned water may be important for or contribute to needs or uses downstream, so claiming it for reuse can reduce downstream flow and might affect someone else's licensed water supply.

Return flow is managed by the government to:

- ensure there are no adverse impacts to the aquatic environment or other water users not only from a diversion of water, but also from a return of water
- characterize the potential changes and impacts to downstream users and the aquatic environment resulting from a diversion
- provide regulators with a better indication of water available for allocation and for all management purposes, cumulatively, within watersheds.

Alberta relies on return flows to achieve its overall water management objectives, maximize the availability of water amongst water users while respecting the system of prior allocation (licence seniority) and assures we continue to meet transboundary obligations to downstream jurisdictions.

Water diversion is the process of capturing, storing, consuming, taking or removing water for any purpose. Sometimes this is described more generally as using water. Diverting water requires an authorization by the Government of Alberta, most often by issuing a licence.

Return flow is the quantity of water returned by a licence holder following their diversion and use of water. This might include raw water, process-affected water, captured runoff, treated wastewater or any combination of these. Return flows must meet a suitable quality before being discharged.

The opportunity

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (EPA) wants to hear from Albertans about water reuse, including how the *Water Act* should recognize return flow as a fundamental component of the water management system, so that it more clearly describes Alberta's authority for continued regulatory oversight.

The purpose is to assure the integrity of the overall water management system is maintained, so that alternative water sources and wastewater reuse innovation can be broadly enabled, with new and specific regulatory authority.

EPA will review how to incorporate net diversion licences and the circumstances when this type of situation could be considered. A net diversion licence is where a licence holder has been permitted to receive credit for returning water to the source of diversion. Notwithstanding those cases where a net diversion can be authorized under the conditions of a licence, Alberta will continue to issue licences for their allocation of water, regardless of how much water is returned.

Why can't licensees just reuse, or provide their leftover water (return flow) to someone else, to reuse?

The *Water Act*, and Alberta's previous water legislation, never explicitly contemplated this outcome.

Licences are issued to a specific licence holder, for a specific purpose and amount, and with conditions of use. Other uses or secondary users are not permitted unless expressly authorized or conditioned.

Once the licensed purpose is fulfilled, any remaining water is expected to be returned to the system. This means the province can decide whether the returned water can be reallocated to a new licence downstream or if it should remain in the waterbody to meet other water management needs, such as supporting environmental flows, maintaining water levels, or meeting commitments to neighbouring jurisdictions. Other uses, reuse, or secondary users are not permitted unless expressly authorized or conditioned.

Ownership of water is vested in the Crown as a natural resource managed for the benefit and use of all Albertans. This is a founding principle of our system, established under federal legislation (the 1894 *Northwest Irrigation Act*) even before Alberta became a province. Water is managed by government for the benefit of all Albertans and all use of water must be recognized or authorized under the provisions of the act.

Alberta

Current reuse of water

The *Water Act* does not currently lay out a process or have specific tools to authorize reusing licensed water. Water reuse and using alternative sources such as treated waste water make sense in some circumstances. Reusing is especially beneficial if it:

- reduces the impact on the natural environment by offsetting diversions that would otherwise come from rivers, lakes, streams or aquifers,
- reduces the water quality changes or impacts created by treated water discharges, or
- can create local alternative supply options and drought resiliency for some types of water users.

EPA created interim guidance that provided the circumstances and requirements where reuse of certain treated waste waters can be considered. The process uses an authorizing letter from a regulator to recognize a transfer of a treated wastewater for use by another party, and as appropriate amends the original *Water Act* licence to recognize reduced return flow resulting from the original diversion.

We want to hear from you

Consider these questions on alternative water sources and wastewater reuse before providing your feedback:

- How could return flow be defined in the *Water Act*, or recognized in licences, so it is clear what might be eligible, or needed, for enabling reuse or alternative water sources?
- What operational limitations might need to be considered for enabling reuse?
- Would there be a need to account for regional differences?

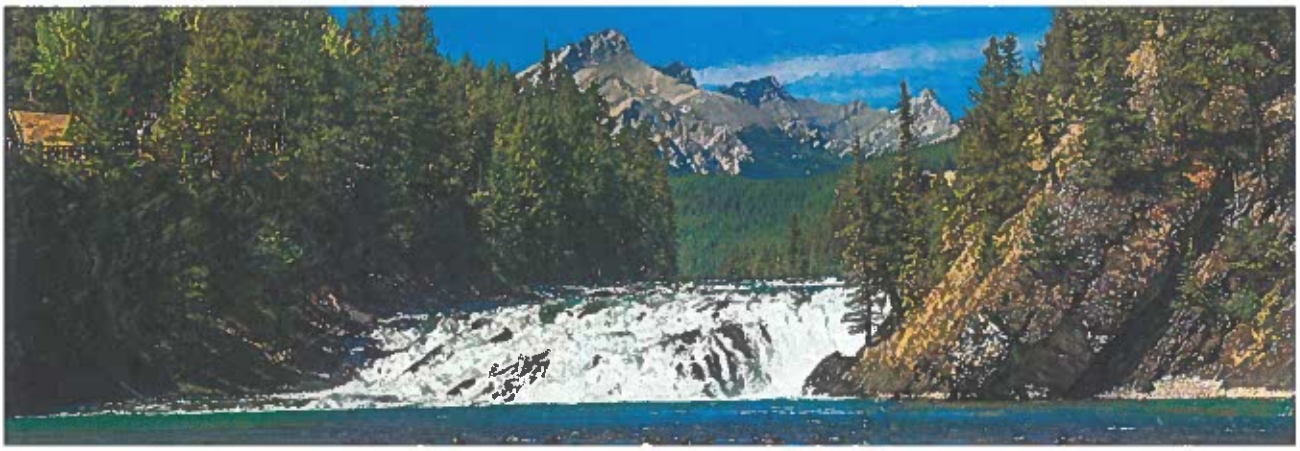
Get engaged

Learn more about the Water Availability engagement and have your say at alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement

Alberta

Enhancing Water Availability

Engagement to Identify Opportunities in Alberta



Water is one of Alberta's most precious resources. Every one of us use it, consume it, and rely on it.

The province is facing both increasing water demand and severe weather events including drought and floods. While government has taken a number of recent actions to respond to droughts and support water users, this is just the start.

We know that a resilient and efficient water management strategy is essential for safeguarding Alberta's community health, environment and economy. That's why Alberta Environment and Protected Areas is engaging to look at the best ways to strengthen the system and sustainably enhance water availability for years to come.

Increasing pressures and challenges

Our province is poised and being called on for growth across economic sectors. This includes growing communities, increased agriculture and food production, increased hydrogen production to serve global energy needs, interest in nuclear energy and data centres and so on. All of this requires water.

At the same time, we know that additional stress is being placed on the water system. Not only is the province growing rapidly, but recent drought, water shortages and water infrastructure failures have all highlighted why we must manage water resources carefully and thoughtfully.

Just consider these recent events:

- In 2023 and 2024, Alberta experienced drought conditions in many parts of the province. The Oldman, South Saskatchewan and Milk River basins faced significant drought conditions in multiple water management areas. At the same time, the Peace River / Slave River, Red Deer River and Bow River basins were in priority call management, and the Athabasca River was under the monitoring and observation stage.

- In June 2024, a water pipe in Montana that diverts water from the St. Mary River to the Milk River burst and the St. Mary canal diversion was shut down. The infrastructure will not be fully repaired until 2025.

Alberta

- In June 2024, the City of Calgary experienced water main breaks that significantly affected water availability and highlighting the need for effective maintenance and resiliency of systems. This led to water conservation measures.
- In August 2024, BC Hydro started filling the Site C reservoir, resulting in reduced flows in the Peace River downstream of the dam. The Site C dam is located 62 kilometres upstream of where the Peace River crosses the British Columbia-Alberta border. Alberta Environment and Protected Areas measured and forecasted flows in the river and continues to work closely with BC Hydro to identify and manage potential impacts downstream.

These are just a few examples of recent events that impacted Alberta's water system. While each is unique, they all highlight areas where different approaches, policies and infrastructure might be required. That is why Alberta Environment and Protected Areas is leading this water engagement and seeking your input.

Building off recent actions

Alberta has shown that it can rise to any challenge. Over the past year, water licence holders, water users, communities, Indigenous partners and the public have taken various actions to address the challenges posed by water shortages and drought and infrastructure challenges.

Alberta's government has made water management a top priority. This includes the following actions taken over the past year:

- Established the Minister's water advisory committee, and stood up the Drought Command Team.
- Increased the monitoring of snowpack (using LiDAR) and precipitation trends.
- Launched the Drought and Flood Protection Program to help protect homes, businesses and lives.
- Released Alberta's Drought Response Plan to guide the province through any and all drought conditions.
- Facilitated the largest voluntary water-sharing agreements in Alberta history. In southern Alberta, major water licence holders, including irrigation districts and municipalities voluntarily agreed to reduce their water use, allowing more water to stay in the system so junior licence holders did not run dry.
- Worked with Municipal District of Pincher Creek and the village of Cowley in southern Alberta to reposition their water intakes, which had gone dry with the low levels of the Oldman reservoir.
- Worked with municipalities to understand and coordinate the release of wastewater effluent to avoid stressing the water system during times of low water flow.
- Reduced regulatory burden through expedited regulatory processes to address concerns related to drought. This includes prioritized applications and processes related to groundwater licences, surface water licences and approvals under the *Water Act*.
- Worked with communities in northern Alberta to understand how they use water for transportation, especially in the context of emergency evacuation routes with increased wildfire risk.
- Amended legislation to allow government to take key actions to improve response time and act quickly to address and alleviate the effects of a water emergency, including: determine the priority of water use; allow temporary low-risk, water transfers between major water basins; exempt certain drought or flood mitigation activities to speed up the process; and allow temporary entrance, occupation and use of private property and land if specific actions are needed to mitigate the emergency.
- Committed $1.3 billion in capital funding over the next three years, including $251 million to better prepare the province for floods and droughts; $272 million for irrigation projects; and $539 million to support municipal water supply and wastewater infrastructure.
- Launched alberta.ca/drought to provide regular updates and improve public communication.

Responding to the Office of the Auditor General

In July 2024, the Office of the Auditor General released a Surface Water Management Audit report, noting the need to enhance effective processes to manage surface water allocation and use. The auditor recommended establishing a process identifying the need for water conservation; improving licence and compliance monitoring processes to ensure decisions are consistently made and use of water is appropriately monitored; and having the department publicly report water usage and allocation.

The department is already taking action to maximize Alberta's water supply, reduce the impacts of drought, support businesses and communities, and make every drop count. For example, water conservation objectives are in place in areas with high water demand or where water shortages are more common. The department is also improving documentation processes for water allocation and management, including working to make water licensing and use information more readily available.

Looking to the future

Albertans and water licence holders have repeatedly proven they can work together and successfully navigate challenges. Water stewardship is a shared responsibility, and we appreciate the work of the many water users and stakeholders who continue to find solutions to manage through drought, water shortages and other challenges.

With increasing water variability and a growing province, new policy and regulatory tools may be needed to increase water availability for Albertans and optimize Alberta's water management system while continuing to protect the aquatic environment.

We are looking to the future. We need to build off the great work that has been done by many across this province and see if there are other long-term solutions that can help address the water management issues that are facing the system. This includes reviewing Alberta's existing policy and legislation and seeing if there are ways to make our water systems more sustainable and supportive for communities, the economy and the environment.

That's where you come in. We want your input.

Engagement on Water Availability

Alberta's *Water Act* focuses on the planning, use and enforcement needed to manage and protect Alberta's water. It has not been substantively amended since 1999, when it first came into force.

The Minister of Environment and Protected Areas' mandate letter includes a commitment to "review Alberta's water management strategy to increase the availability of water and water licences to Alberta municipalities, businesses and agricultural producers while maintaining the highest standards of water conservation and treatment."

Environment and Protected Areas wants to hear from Albertans about ways to enhance Alberta's water management system and make more water available for use for sustainable growth. We want to hear about opportunities and barriers. We want to hear ways that this province can:

- increase water conservation, efficiency, and productivity
- free up and optimize use of available water
- better capture and improve access to existing water sources
- improve water management and make faster approval decisions

Engagement Scope

We know Albertans are passionate about water and have important local knowledge of their watersheds and the issues being faced. Feedback over the years has identified some initial opportunities, including:

- improving measuring and reporting on water use and availability;
- enhancing water conservation, efficiency, and productivity;
- identifying opportunities and barriers for using alternative sources of water and wastewater reuse;
- clarifying use of rainwater;
- improving water allocation and transfers to accommodate need and demand;
- identifying criteria for when transfers of water between major river basin boundaries might be appropriate; and
- updating or enabling additional exemptions for water diversions or activities.

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas is open to hearing your thoughts on these ideas or any opportunity to more effectively manage water in this province. Here are some guiding questions to help identify ideas before providing your feedback:

- What opportunities are there to manage water more effectively in Alberta?
- Which policies, programs, or approaches are working effectively? Which need to be strengthened, and how?
- What challenges or barriers do you face within Alberta's current water management system?
- Are there means to improve allocation, licensing, and transfers?
- Is the information available to support your water management needs?
- What do you think should be the top priorities for the province when considering its review of water management policies and potential amendments to the *Water Act* and its policies?
- What are grey and green infrastructure opportunities to enhance water availability?
- What technology and innovation is available and emergent for more effective water use and management – efficiency and productivity, infrastructure maintenance and longevity, metering, forecasting, etc.?

Alberta

This open engagement will help to identify priority areas of focus. Your input and considerations will be used to help inform future policy options and possible legislative amendments.

Importantly, we know that water is a shared resource. This requires collaboration across the government, and Environment and Protected Areas is working in step with Agriculture and Irrigation, Municipal Affairs, Indigenous Relations and others. This also requires collaboration across water users and managers, be it for household, business, agriculture, environmental, recreation or other needs.

What comes next?

We appreciate you sharing your thoughts. We're undertaking a staged engagement process starting in the fall of 2024, which will build from the lessons learned from water management issues addressed over the past few years.

In October, government will start engaging key water-using sector associations and organizations, Indigenous communities and organizations, and water partners like the Alberta Water Council.

In November, we will expand this work and include more water-using sector participants, more water partners and public engagement.

Input on opportunities and barriers can be provided through alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement

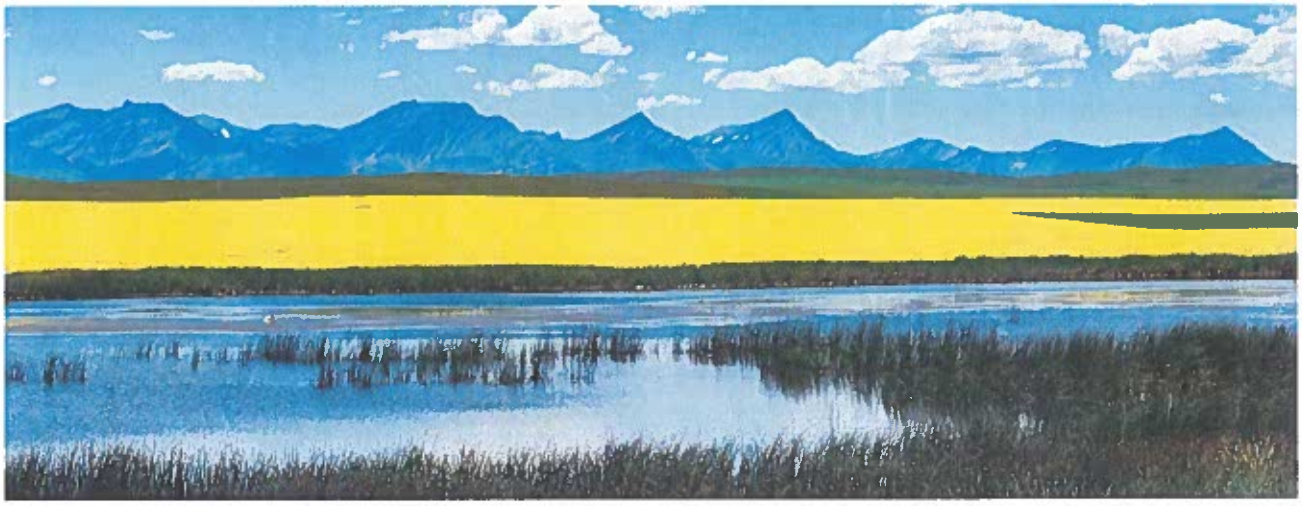
We know that improving water management requires ongoing time and effort. We will listen closely and review the input received through engagement before deciding next steps.

Thank you

We appreciate your input. Working together, we can find the most effective ways to maximize water available for sustainable growth in Alberta.

Exemptions from Water Authorizations

Water Availability Engagement



Population growth, economic growth and water variability are challenging the water management system in Alberta. New policy and regulatory tools could be used to increase water availability for Albertans and optimize the water management system to better address these issues while continuing to protect the aquatic environment.

This document provides background information on just one type of water management opportunity identified through conversations with stakeholders. It is intended to spark ideas and generate conversation.

The Government of Alberta invites your feedback on any opportunity to increase water availability in the province.

Ownership of water

Ownership of water is vested in the Crown as a natural resource managed for the benefit and use of all Albertans This is a founding principle of the system, established under federal legislation (the 1894 *Northwest Irrigation Act*) even before Alberta became a province. Water is managed by government for the benefit of all Albertans and all use of water must be recognized or authorized under the provisions of the act.

Current situation

Under the *Water Act*, activities and actions that impact water quantity and quality require authorization.

Approvals are used to authorize activities that alter the flow or level of a waterbody; that change the direction, location, or flow of water; cause siltation or erosion; or may be capable of causing an effect on the aquatic environment.

Licences are used to authorize diversions of water. Water diversion is the process of capturing, storing, consuming, taking, or removing water for any purpose. Sometimes this is described more generally as using water.

Unless there is a specific exemption, anyone that wants to alter or impact a water body or wants to use (divert) surface or ground water in Alberta, requires an approval and/or a licence under the *Water Act*.

Exemptions from licences and approvals

The Government of Alberta has established exemptions for certain types or categories of water activities and uses, which allows Albertans to use or impact water without having to apply for an authorization. Typically, these activities and uses are relatively small, considered low risk, and have minimal or manageable effects on other water users or the environment.

Alberta

Probably the most well-known are the exemptions available for specified **household purposes** and **exempted agricultural users** of water, formalized under the *Water Act* to acknowledge the ongoing importance of those sources to those users. Other exemptions exist, such as (not a complete list):

- fire fighting
- certain agricultural dugouts
- stormwater from a defined storm drainage facility
- saline groundwater
- temporary camps
- alternative watering systems for livestock
- manual pump water wells
- landscaping
- dewatering sand and gravel or construction sites
- building ice bridges in certain defined areas
- certain wetland replacement projects.

Exemptions have been added or amended from time to time, and while some exemptions are simple, many are conditioned with criteria specifying when or how they apply. For example, a dugout can be only constructed without an approval if it is 2,500 cubic metres or less; not located in a fish-bearing watercourse, or a lake or wetland; not located in the same watercourse and parcel of land as an existing dugout; and will not affect water flow on another parcel of land.

Codes of Practice

Another tool that government can use to streamline authorizations is to create a Code of Practice (codes). Codes are typically used when an activity is lower risk, consistent and repeatable, but still needs rules and requirements to make sure activities are conducted safely and responsibly and will not cause negative impacts to others or the environment. The codes provide written standards and conditions that set out all requirements to start, undertake, and complete an activity. The proponent is required to follow the code and only notifies the department they will be undertaking the activity – they do not have to apply. Some examples of these include:

- watercourse crossings
- outfall structures
- hydrostatic testing of pipelines
- wetland replacement works.

Some ideas for new or updated water exemptions might be best addressed by considering them for a dedicated code of practice.

The opportunity

Environment and Protected Areas (EPA) could consider potential amendments that will improve water accessibility and availability to certain sources of water and remove unnecessary regulatory burden for Albertans. Many initial comments from Albertans were heard in spring 2024, as Alberta was preparing a coordinated drought response. Those ideas, plus others EPA identified based on the department's experience with certain applications, identified some possible changes. These could include, but are not limited to:

- increasing the approval exemption threshold for dugouts, to match the licence exemption threshold.
- increasing the licence exemption threshold for dugouts to include potential for household use.
- increasing the licence exemption threshold for stormwater use (to align with dugouts).
- increasing exemption thresholds for building wetland replacement projects (to align with dugouts and stormwater).
- a new exemption for certain public borrow pits in the Green Area of Alberta.

Green Areas include public lands that are managed primarily for forest production, watershed protection, fish and wildlife management, and recreation.

Classification: Public

- new exemption criteria for a range of minor uses such as bridge and sign washing, dust control, and emergency preparedness (e.g., fire and spills prevention).
- double the exemption for small temporary camps.

The *Water Act* reinforces the importance of water as a vital resource, and that water use be justified and not be wasteful.

When something has been exempted, there is no information or data collected by EPA or the Alberta Energy Regulator about that activity or purpose.

As exempted volumes of water use increase, there is greater potential to impact existing licensed water users in the system and there is no way to directly assure compliance, and any resulting impacts can be challenging to track.

Potential exemption changes were evaluated acknowledging both these factors and the desire to remove application burden. EPA also recognizes there are challenges in sourcing potentially available water to support people, agricultural producers, growth in communities, and expanding and emerging industries particularly in southern Alberta.

We want to hear from you

Consider these questions on exemptions that are available for water approvals and licensing before providing your feedback:

- Do you have any specific feedback or advice on exploring changes to exemptions – scope, conditions, or quantities/amounts?
- Are there any other minor uses of water, or low impact or low consequence activities, that might benefit from regulatory streamlining or outright exemption?
- Are there other risks or concerns with exempting certain things, either currently or potential exemptions?

Get engaged

Learn more about the Water Availability engagement and have your say at alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement

Alberta

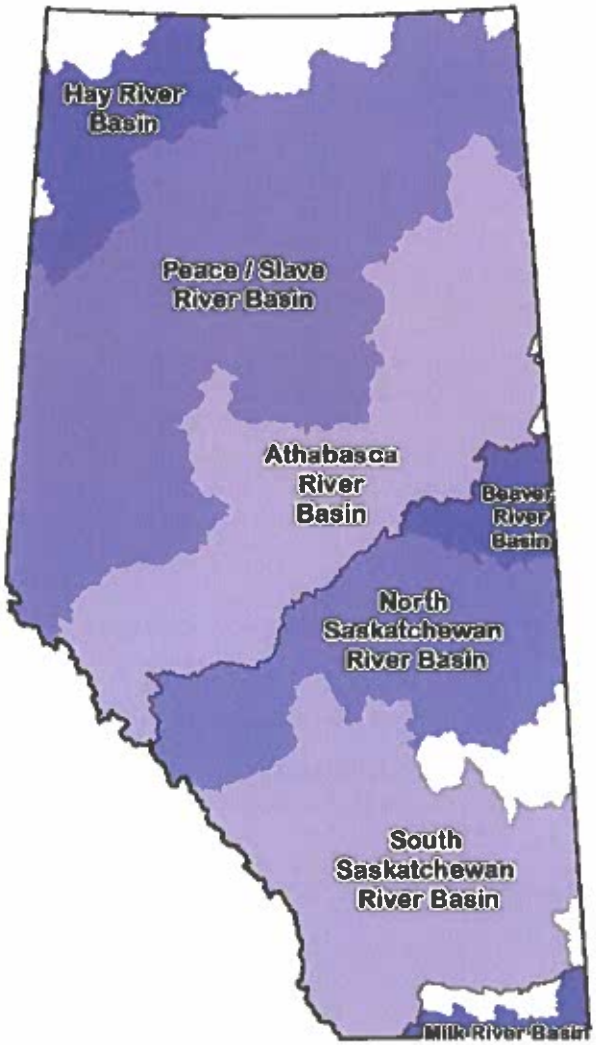
Classification: Public

Inter-basin Transfers

Water Availability Engagement

Alberta has seven major river basins defined in the Act:

- Peace/Slave River basin
- Athabasca River basin
- North Saskatchewan River basin
- South Saskatchewan River basin
- Milk River basin
- Beaver River basin
- Hay River basin



Population growth, economic growth and water variability are challenging the water management system in Alberta. New policy and regulatory tools could be used to increase water availability for Albertans and optimize the water management system to better address these issues while continuing to protect the aquatic environment.

This document provides background information on just one type of water management opportunity identified through conversations with stakeholders. It is intended to spark ideas and generate conversation.

The Government of Alberta invites your feedback on any opportunity to increase water availability in the province.

What are inter-basin transfers?

Under Alberta's *Water Act*, an inter-basin transfer is a water licence that allows water from one major river basin to be used in another major river basin. A river basin is a watershed that collects all precipitation, surface runoff and sources of groundwater to generate the streamflow seen in rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands.

Rivers in the Hay basin, the Peace/Slave basin and the Athabasca basin flow to the Arctic Ocean. Rivers in the Beaver basin, the North Saskatchewan basin and the South Saskatchewan basin flow to Hudson Bay. Flows in the Milk basin eventually reach the Gulf of Mexico.

Current situation

When the *Water Act* was passed in 1999, it included a provision (section 47) requiring that before any licence for an inter-basin transfer of water could be issued it had to be approved by the Legislature by passing a special Act.

> **Section 47:** A licence shall not be issued that authorizes the transfer of water between major river basins in the Province unless the licence is specifically authorized by a special Act of the Legislature.

Putting this requirement into the Act reflected public concerns that came up in consultations for the new *Water Act* around the idea of bulk water transfers. These concerns also resulted in a separate provision (section 46) requiring a special Act of the Legislature be passed before issuing a licence that will transfer water outside of Canada.

Special Act of the Legislature

Obtaining a special Act of the Legislature is a multi-step process. First, an application is received signifying a transfer of water between basins is being requested. Alberta Environment and Protected Areas (EPA) works with the applicant and with decision makers to assess whether government would accept the application and be willing to proceed with a special Act process. If so, the applicant is required to conduct public consultation outlining the proposed project, and submitted findings are reviewed. The Minister determines if public consultation was adequate or if additional consultation is required. If consultation is adequate, and other conditions are met, a special Act is then drafted for review and decision by Cabinet. The Bill must be introduced into the legislature where it is debated and, if passed, is granted royal assent, becoming law.

> The purpose of the passing the special Act is to give the Director under the *Water Act* – who is the decision maker on licence applications – the authority to issue the inter-basin transfer licence.
>
> The licence application has gone through all the regular requirements of a standard application, but with added oversight and the information/analysis needed to ensure the issues that can happen with an inter-basin transfer of water were addressed.
>
> Passing a special Act is the way Alberta demonstrates the licence is in the public interest, because the elected officials, as representative of Albertans, have given their approval.

The opportunity

The *Water Act* does not prohibit inter-basin transfers, however it does require they first be authorized by a special Act of the Legislature. Since 1999, six special Acts have been passed, all for regional pipelines carrying municipally treated drinking water.

Various other relatively straightforward proposed inter-basin transfers have not proceeded because of the extra burden and complexity of seeking a special Act.

EPA could consider identifying criteria and thresholds for inter-basin transfers that pose a low risk to the environment and other users, where a special Act would not have to be passed by the Legislature to issue the licence.

> If inter-basin transfer requirements were changed to recognize low risk types of transfers, licences will still be required for using and moving water, including all necessary application requirements, regulatory review, and opportunity for public notice and appeal. There will always be an evaluation for impacts to the environment and other water users, including any conditions for diverting, using and returning any water back to the environment.

Right now, whether 50 cubic metres or 50 million cubic metres of water is applied for, these amounts must be approved by the Legislature even though the potential impacts and consequences are completely different.

EPA is not considering any changes to Section 46 of the Act, which requires a special Act to issue a licence proposing to transfer water outside of Canada.

Managing environmental impacts

Any licence under the *Water Act*, regardless of volume, requires applications to be evaluated for impacts to the aquatic environment and to other water users. Applicants must provide an adequate assessment of potential impacts. The amount applied for is always evaluated against water availability, and environmental flow needs are incorporated into conditions of the licence.

Similarly, if water quality, aquatic organisms, invasive species or disease/pathogens are issues of concern, these considerations are factored into decisions and a licence will include conditions to prevent adverse impacts. Alternatively, a licence may not be issued at all if the risks cannot be adequately mitigated.

Alberta

Examples of potential inter-basin transfers

Scenarios where inter-basin transfers may be appropriate:

- Treated municipal (potable) water supply, for example regional water lines/systems. Drinking water is high quality and poses little risk to people or the environment, particularly when piped between municipalities.
- The special Act requirement does not distinguish between surface and groundwater sources. Aquifers typically yield much less water than surface water sources. A separate, lower amount could be created to define a low-risk groundwater threshold.
- If a project or operation is located on both sides of a major river basin boundary. If the project were located anywhere else, the licence would be relatively straightforward.
- Treated wastewater is increasingly being considered as an alternative water source (water reuse/water recycling). Reusing treated wastewater can avoid taking new water from a natural water body, reducing net environmental impact and could provide a net benefit even in an inter-basin transfer context. EPA could formalize existing policy rules allowing treated wastewater transfer between major basins.

Comparing Alberta's approach to other places

Rules for inter-basin types of water transfers differ across other Canadian jurisdictions reviewed.

Most places recognize significance and potential concern and have developed one or more special rules for them. However, it does not seem the situation arises very often in any jurisdiction, so it's not clear how often the different rules have to be implemented or used.

Like Alberta, in Saskatchewan and British Columbia inter-basin transfers are generally allowed within provincial boundaries, but unlike Alberta these can be approved by a provincial regulator (i.e., they do not require special legislation). However British Columbia does have an upper limit on allowable transfers, and prohibits any large inter-basin transfers. So, while Alberta requires a special Act, we don't impose any other specific limitation on proposed transfers.

Inter-basin transfers are not allowed in Manitoba or Ontario, with very few exceptions (e.g., small amounts/defined purposes like bottled/packaged water; and in certain emergencies).

We want to hear from you

Consider these questions on inter-basin transfers before providing your feedback:

- Where, or under what circumstances, might inter-basin transfers be appropriate or necessary? When are they not appropriate or necessary?
- What criteria might be applied to support evaluation of inter-basin transfers (e.g., volume threshold, or identified low-risk or other practical circumstances such as regional potable water systems or water for projects that happen to straddle two major river basins)?
- Are there impacts or benefits of removing the requirement of a special Act of the Legislature for some inter-basin transfers?
- Could certain decisions to support some inter-basin transfers be made by the Cabinet or by others instead?

Get engaged

Learn more about the Water Availability engagement and have your say at alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement

Use of Rainwater

Water Availability Engagement

Population growth, economic growth and water variability are challenging the water management system in Alberta. New policy and regulatory tools could be used to increase water availability for Albertans and optimize the water management system to better address these issues while continuing to protect the aquatic environment.

This document provides background information on just one type of water management opportunity identified through conversations with stakeholders. It is intended to spark ideas and generate conversation.

The Government of Alberta invites your feedback on any opportunity to increase water availability in the province.

Current situation

Ownership of water is vested in the Crown as a natural resource managed for the benefit and use of all Albertans. The *Water Act* does not currently define rainwater or precipitation and therefore does not specify whether rainwater is included as water under the *Act*. Without clarity, it can be misinterpreted that any volume of rainwater could be collected (harvested), stored and used without a licence or any oversight.

If large volumes of rainwater are stored and used without a licence, local waterbodies and recognized water users (licensed, household or traditional agricultural) may be impacted from captured precipitation that reduces runoff. Without oversight, it is challenging to assess or mitigate these potential impacts.

This is a larger risk in basins that are water-short or closed to additional licences being issued like the Bow, Oldman and South Saskatchewan River Basins. These same basins are more likely to have users who want to augment existing supply with large rainwater collection schemes (i.e., large roof systems).

Rainwater versus stormwater

Stormwater is surface runoff that has been collected on the ground through a storm drainage system and is regulated under the *Water Act*. Rainwater is collected from a roof surface or intercepted by an engineered rainwater collection system.

Compared to stormwater, rainwater is usually higher quality because it has not flowed over ground surfaces (e.g., parking lots or streets) and has not been in contact with potential sources of contamination like fertilizer, herbicide/pesticide, pet waste, oil, grease, anti-freeze. From a public health perspective, rainwater generally requiresless treatment than stormwater.

Alberta

The opportunity

Environment and Protected Areas is seeking clarity on rainwater collection, storage and use:

1. clarifying that rainwater is included as water to be managed by the Crown, and
2. determining what could constitute as low-risk rainwater collection, storage and use that would remain exempt from any potential licensing requirements (including residential rain barrels).

The Government of Alberta is not considering the regulation of individual residential rain barrels. Any potential amendments would explicitly exempt residential rainwater barrels from regulation, similar to how dugouts and on-farm water management are currently exempt from regulation.

Rainwater and its management

Environment and Protected Areas (EPA) considers large proposals for rainwater use on a case- by-case basis. There is no clear *Water Act* process for Albertans who wish to use rainwater. This creates uncertainty for potential rainwater projects that could have environmental and economic benefits for Albertans.

Some municipalities in Alberta have rainwater guidelines or policies in place. While these may provide helpful information to residents and builders and need to be followed if mandatory, they do not address the lack of provincial regulatory certainty under the *Water Act* with respect to rainwater use.

There are voluntary guidelines in place for residential rainwater use in the Alberta Guidelines for Residential Rainwater Harvesting Systems 2010.

Benefits of rainwater use

Environmental benefits of using rainwater include increasing resilience of the water supply and drought mitigation. The high quality of rainwater makes it suitable and appropriate for many uses. Common uses include lawn and garden watering, greenhouse irrigation, and indoor toilet and urinal flushing. Municipalities may see incremental benefits in the amount of water they have to take and treat for household use, resulting in cost savings and deferring expensive upgrades.

EPA recognizes volumes of rainwater can be used without negatively impacting the environment or other water users.

Through stakeholder engagement, the government could determine a volume for larger commercial or industrial collection systems that could be safely used without a licence, while maintaining groundwater recharge and overland flow to rivers, streams, and lakes.

Focusing on licensing large volumes of rainwater use would ensure the environment, water users and jurisdictions downstream of Alberta are not adversely impacted by an increasing reliance on rainwater use, especially in regions where water is already closely managed.

We want to hear from you

Consider these questions on defining rainwater before providing your feedback:

- How could rainwater be defined for better management under the *Water Act*?
- Aside from a small residential exemption for rainwater, should government consider other potential exemptions (for example, non-consumptive use, or a simple volume threshold for any purpose)?
- Would there be a need to account for regional differences?

Get engaged

Learn more about the Water Availability engagement and have your say at alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement

Water Allocation & Transfers

Water Availability Engagement

Population growth, economic growth and water variability are challenging the water management system in Alberta. New policy and regulatory tools could be used to increase water availability for Albertans and optimize the water management system to better address these issues while continuing to protect the aquatic environment.

This document provides background information on just one type of water management opportunity identified through conversations with stakeholders. It is intended to spark ideas and generate conversation.

The Government of Alberta invites your feedback on any opportunity to increase water availability in the province.

Current situation

Water diversion is the process of capturing, storing, consuming, taking, or removing water for any purpose.

Unless there is a specific exemption, anyone that wants to divert (use) surface or groundwater in Alberta requires a licence under the *Water Act*. A licence identifies:

- the water source
- location of the diversion site
- volume, rate, and timing of water to be diverted
- priority date of the licence and
- any conditions of the licence that describe or affect when or how water may be diverted.

Licences are issued with a maximum quantity allowable, however the licensing process has always recognized that for most licensees, use of an allocation will vary from year to year. For example, allocations may not be used as much during wet years, but full allocations may be required during drought years. However, licence holders often elect not to use their full allocation by adjusting according to the available water supply at that time. Water use is often impacted by weather conditions, economic and market factors impacting production output, crop rotations, operational outages, etc. Allowance for operational flexibility is a key consideration in making decisions.

Licences have been issued in Alberta since 1894 under different acts. Any licences prior to the *Water Act* were issued without a specific term and do not expire. Since 1999, all new licences have a term and must be renewed or will expire. Since older licences do not have a provision for periodic renewal, regulators have limited ability to amend or update these licences if the circumstances under which they originally asked for water have changed. This was done to continue the principle of certainty for licensees that made investments based on a known water supply risk.

Ownership of water

Ownership of water is vested in the Crown as a natural resource managed for the benefit and use of all Albertans. This is a founding principle of the system, established under federal legislation (the 1894 *Northwest Irrigation Act*) even before Alberta became a province. Water is managed by government for the benefit of all Albertans and all use of water must be recognized or authorized under the provisions of the act.

The *Water Act* includes provisions of "use it or lose it" that can be applied to all licences, including older pre-*Water Act* licences. A licence can be cancelled by the Director if:

- no water under the allocation has been diverted, or the rights granted under a licence have not been used, over a three-year period, and
- there is no reasonable prospect the licensee will resume diverting all or part of the allocation or resume an exercise of the rights granted under the licence.

Cancelling licences is rare because every opportunity is given to licensees to show they could and intend to use water allocated to them. A more typical scenario is a licensee that consistently uses some portion of their allocated water and is unable to demonstrate the need for their current full allocation. In this case, the Act does not give authority for an overallocated amount to be reduced to reflect the actual use or need. Currently, outright cancellation is the only option generally available.

How does cancellation impact water availability?

The amount of water that can be allocated from a water source is limited. When a licence is issued it is assumed the licensee, at any given time, would be able to take the maximum of what they are entitled to. The next licence application therefore assumes that previously allocated water is unavailable or can't be relied upon to be available. Unused allocations can therefore prevent new water applicants from receiving a licence.

Cornerstones of allocation: availability, reliability, and flexibility

The *Water Act* reinforces the importance of water as a resource and that water use be justified and not be wasteful. The allocation in a licence specifies a maximum annual diversion quantity. This amount is the maximum a licensee could take under any circumstance regardless of priority, rate, timing, or any other condition of the licence. If potential changes occur, regulators will continue to issue licences knowing an allocation has to consider a range of expected operational needs within a project or purpose and will account for factors such as weather and climate (needing more water in a dry year, for example), economic factors that can change production levels and water demand from year to year, and other contingencies.

Water licence transfers

When the Bow, Oldman, and South Saskatchewan sub-basins were closed to new water allocations in 2007, water for future population and economic growth was to be accommodated though licence transfers by existing licensees who have opportunities to invest in conservation and efficiency or make other business, operational, and investment decisions that free up existing water. Water transfers enable both temporary and permanent reallocations of water, allowing flexibility in water use without compromising existing rights or environmental health.

When a licensee is willing to transfer all or part of their allocation to another party, the Director under the *Water Act* can approve the transfer, provided there are no adverse impacts on the environment or other water users.

Transferring a water licence could impact the existing priority rights of other users, which is why transfers must be enabled by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, generally by an approved water management plan as was done for the South Saskatchewan basin. When a licensee agrees to a transfer, an application to the department is submitted and is reviewed on technical and regulatory grounds. Directors under the *Water Act* must consider, and fully mitigate, impacts on other water users rights and the aquatic environment, prior to approving a transfer. Government can withhold up to ten per cent of water from a transfer for conservation if it is in the public interest to protect the aquatic environment or to meet a Water Conservation Objective, as long as this authority is outlined in an approved water management plan or by an order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council. This holdback is generally avoided and only occurs in specific situations.

Since 2006, approximately 400 water licence transfers have occurred. The Government of Alberta does not participate in the contractual details or negotiations of these transfers, leaving buyers and sellers to handle transactions privately, often through brokers or direct business dealings.

The opportunity

Alberta Environment and Protected Areas could consider potential amendments to the *Water Act* and streamlining to address fairness and transparency of the existing licensing and transfer system and reflect actual demonstrated need or demand, and not just the current remedy of cancelling a licence, acknowledging that licensee flexibility must be preserved.

This potential change could improve the fairness of the existing licensing system, recognizing that some licensees currently hold what is in effect "paper" water that is unavailable for other users that may need it. This issue is most acute in the Bow, Oldman and South Saskatchewan River sub-basins, where new water allocations are not available and water must be found from an existing, willing licensee including a negotiation of cost to acquire a licence, which can then be transferred to a new use. Simplifying the water allocation transfer system may encourage greater water use efficiency, and moving water allocations between different uses. Difficulty in sourcing water to support population growth in communities as well as expanding and emerging industries is a factor impacting economic opportunity across the region.

We want to hear from you

Consider these questions on water allocation and transfers before providing your feedback:

- Should government be able to review a water licence if the circumstances, assumptions, or policies under which they were originally issued have changed?
- Once issued, should licensees be able to benefit from a water licence without any further expectations to ensure or demonstrate a beneficial use back to the province?
- Are there impacts or benefits to introducing authority to review or revise water allocations to support more water transfers to new or different users?

Get engaged

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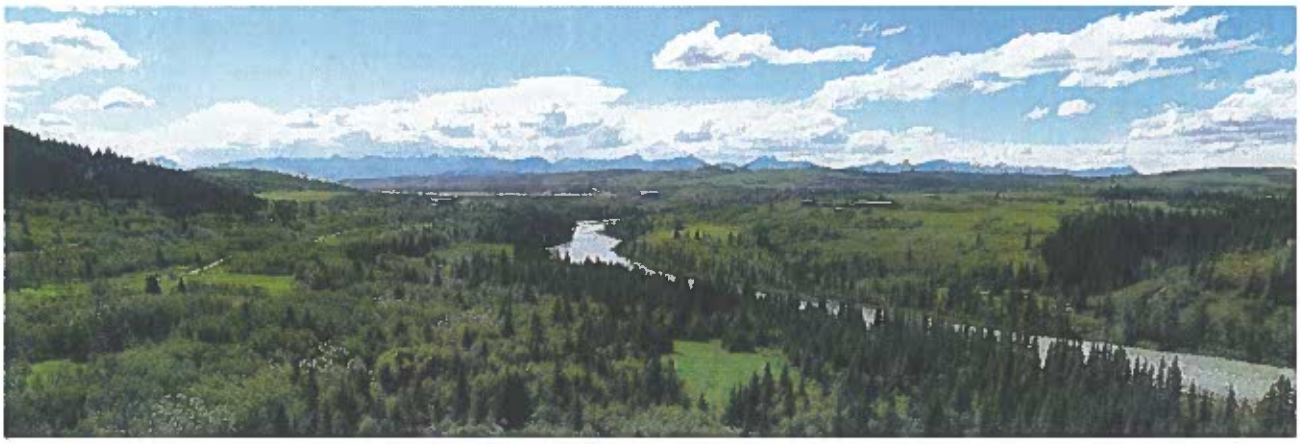
Alberta

Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity

Water Availability Engagement



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Water variability

Demand management through water conservation, water use efficiency, and productivity is one of the key strategies that could be used to address water variability. Efficient water use can ensure users get the most out of every drop of water. Reducing demand can also delay or offset the need for building expensive water storage infrastructure.

Current situation

Water conservation tools and strategies can be adopted at multiple levels. Provincial level policies and rules such as Alberta's Water for Life policy and licensing requirements under the *Water Act* can set expectations and requirements around water use through licences.

Water conservation is any beneficial reduction in water use, loss, or waste.

Water efficiency is the accomplishment of a function, task, process, or result with the minimal amount of water feasible.

Water productivity is the amount of water required to produce a unit of any good, service, or societal value.

Municipal bylaws and programs such as water loss audits, watering schedules and per-capita water consumption targets can encourage and/or require residents within municipalities to reduce water use. Sectoral plans such as conservation, efficiency and productivity plans that were developed under Alberta's Water for Life strategy enable major water using industries to plan and set goals to reduce water use and improve water use efficiency.

Alberta's Water for Life strategy adopted the aspirational goal of improving water efficiency and productivity by 30% from 2005 levels by 2015. Alberta's seven major water using sectors voluntarily developed their own water conservation, efficiency, and productivity (CEP) plans to achieve this goal. In 2017, the Alberta Water Council reported that the Water for Life target was exceeded, with overall water use efficiency and productivity of Alberta's seven major water-using sectors improving by 32%.

Alberta

The seven major water using sectors that worked voluntarily to develop and implement plans to meet Water for Life's 30% conservation, efficiency and productivity target:

- Chemical producers
- Downstream petroleum products
- Forestry
- Irrigation
- Upstream oil and gas
- Power generation
- Urban municipalities

Alberta's Water Conservation Policy for Upstream Oil and Gas Operations is a provincial policy that applies to the upstream oil and gas sector. Under this policy, non-water technologies, saline groundwater, recycled wastewater and deeper groundwater are preferred sources to high-quality surface sources. Oil and gas operators are required to assess the feasibility of using alternatives to high quality fresh water sources prior to applying for a water licence.

Municipalities in Alberta can adopt a variety of water conservation tools, including water use pricing, water use restrictions, water loss audits and public education campaigns. Alberta Municipalities provides a range of tools that can be and are used by municipalities in Alberta to conserve water.

Examples of water conservation measures

Recent years' drought conditions have prompted many jurisdictions, including Alberta, to adopt different kinds of water conservation measures. Tools include voluntary measures, mandatory requirements and market-based mechanisms.

Examples of voluntary measures

- Financial assistance for water efficient technologies
- Water conservation targets

Examples of mandatory approaches

- Province wide and/or area-specific mandatory water conservation targets
- Urban water use objectives based on indoor, outdoor, commercial, industrial and institutional and water loss efficient standards
- Sector or industry-based water use efficiency objectives or standards
- Mandatory water audits
- Installation and use of indoor and outdoor low flow appliances

Examples of market-based mechanisms

- Volumetric water pricing
- Sale of water rights

The opportunity

Alberta has made significant efforts and progress in water conservation, efficiency, and productivity, with opportunities to advance even further. Continuous reporting of water use and addressing any existing barriers in water use reporting could help strengthen these efforts. While water metering and reporting are practiced in Alberta, they are more established in other regions facing water variability and drought, such as California, Nevada, and Australia, where clear guidelines for water metering are in place. Although Alberta has good information on overall water allocations, there is room to improve the availability of detailed water use data to support future water management efforts.

Volumetric water use pricing is used in Alberta (by water utility providers), British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Quebec, Nevada, and Arizona to incent water use efficiency and conservation. In Alberta, municipalities have reduced total per capita water use by 23%, in part due to increased water metering and volumetric pricing. In Australia, national pricing principles were established as part of the National Water Initiative to promote water use efficiency and ensure sufficient revenues to support water delivery services. Some jurisdictions also provide financial assistance in the form of rebates or grant funding to adopt water efficient technologies and behaviours.

Other potential measures include simplifying the water allocation transfer system in Alberta, which may encourage greater water use efficiency, and moving water allocations between different uses.

We want to hear from you

Consider these questions on water conservation, efficiency and productivity before providing your feedback:

- What policy measures are most needed and effective to support behaviour change to increase water conservation, efficiency, and productivity? Individual and sector-specific actions and tools?
- What tools or systems can better support movement of underutilized or less productive uses of water to more productive uses or new users (e.g., water trading or transfers)?
- How can we effectively quantify the costs and benefits of water use within allocations, across uses and sectors, and across Alberta?
- Can the maximum use of available water (and making more water available) be achieved through conservation, efficiency, and productivity measures without impacting first-in-time first-in-right prior allocation principles?
- What are the pros and cons of voluntary, mandatory and market-based water conservation strategies?
- How should government consider the costs associated with implementing water conserving technologies?

Get engaged

Learn more about the Water Availability engagement and have your say at alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement

Alberta

Water Measurement and Reporting

Water Availability Engagement

Population growth, economic growth and water variability are challenging the water management system in Alberta. New policy and regulatory tools could be used to increase water availability for Albertans and optimize the water management system to better address these issues while continuing to protect the aquatic environment.

This document provides background information on just one type of water management opportunity identified through conversations with stakeholders. It is intended to spark ideas and generate conversation.

The Government of Alberta invites your feedback on any opportunity to increase water availability in the province.

Current situation

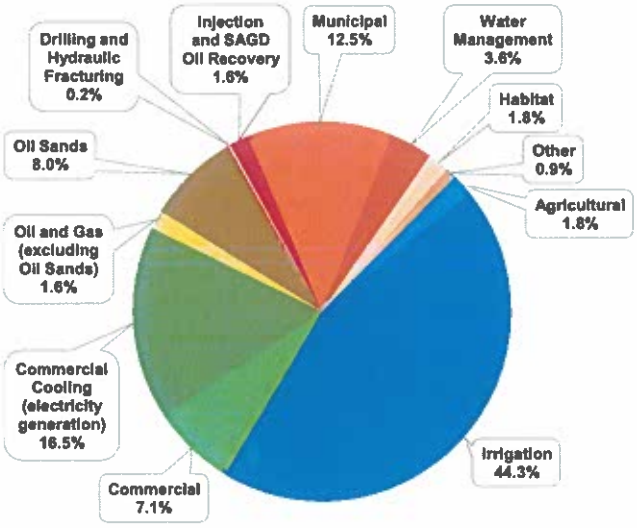
Alberta takes a practical approach to water use reporting requirements. To minimize financial and time burdens on Albertans, most licensees (tens of thousands) are relatively small and therefore generally have not been required to report any information. The department has placed basic mandatory reporting conditions on most medium to large licences (several thousand licensees, which account for most of the water allocated in Alberta) – though some old licences have no requirements.

Water use reporting by licensees is varied and inconsistent. Changes to the *Water Act* could help improve the consistency and timelines of reporting, validation of data that is submitted, reporting compliance, and access to reported water use data in a centralized platform that accommodates regular reporting.

Alberta manages its water resources for the overall benefit of Albertans, for its people, the economy, and environment.

Building a more detailed system for water measurement and reporting would come with financial costs. Government would need engage further to understand how those costs and other responsibilities, such as ensuring reliable and quality data, would be distributed.

2023 surface water allocations by purpose



Classification: Public

The opportunity

The *Water Act* could potentially be amended to ensure any licensee can be directed to monitor and report their water use, (including how it should be done to be consistent and supports allocation and management decisions). Tools could be developed to establish the methods, standards, and reporting protocols necessary to ensure data is transparent and validated.

Understanding water use within Alberta

While Alberta closely tracks how much water is allocated to licensees, an allocation is not actual water use. In fact, the allocation in a licence and the water diverted for use under a licence can sometimes be quite different. Water allocations may be utilized less during wet years, while the higher allocation might be necessary during dry periods. However, licensees often do not use their entire allocation and adjust their usage based on the available water supply. Monitoring and collecting water use data helps us understand Alberta's actual water availability, realize potential efficiencies, and measure water productivity across the economy. The ability to identify who uses water, how much, and when (e.g., seasonal patterns) would help with operational management decisions, planning for growth, and protecting the environment. Acknowledging that use of an allocation requires flexibility and will vary from year to year, it would also inform allocation decisions such as water transfers, which would help increase water availability for new or growing needs.

Water use metering and drought

Knowing and planning for future water demand is an integral part of creating and monitoring drought indicators.

Monitoring and observation are the first stage of Alberta's response to drought.

Once a drought is occurring, collection and coordination of water use data would improve the ability to operate water storage infrastructure such as dams more effectively (e.g., optimize releases to better match actual demands, rather than estimating who might need or want to take water downstream), monitor drought indicators, allow for better planning and cooperation within provincial departments and with municipal and community partners, and support all water using sectors that are impacted by water scarcity during drought.

Digital Regulatory Assurance System

The Digital Regulatory Assurance System (DRAS) is Alberta's modernized environmental regulatory system. It is a secure platform that enables licensees to compile and view all parts of their licence(s) and activities that are subject to environmental regulation.

DRAS allows water licensees to report their water use data online, view licence records, including priority number and water use reports.

Currently, water use reporting is generally required on newer licences and those large to medium size licences that were previously amended. Older licences with no reporting requirements are not part of the DRAS system. This means Alberta lacks a complete picture of water use.

We want to hear from you

Consider these questions on water measuring and reporting before providing your feedback:

- How could government best address the challenges of data collection, availability, and usability?
- What information would be required to support enhanced water management, conservation, efficiency, and productivity?
- What information currently exists, and in what form or frequency?
- What would be the impacts of introducing mandatory water use measurement and reporting? What would be the benefits?
- How could water use be accurately measured over time?
- How could we start (i.e. should there be a prioritized or phased approach) – by region? size of licence? other?
- What types of incentives, supports, or regulatory requirements would be needed?

Get engaged

Learn more about the Water Availability engagement and have your say at alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement

Water Management in Alberta

System Overview

Water is both a resource and a life source. We have a shared responsibility to ensure a healthy, secure and sustainable water supply for Alberta's communities, environment and economy – our quality of life depends on it.

The Water Management System

The water management system in Alberta is a set of provincial laws and public policies foster the wise and efficient use of water while stewarding and protecting aquatic ecosystems in a way that supports the province's water needs, now and in the future.

The Minister of Environment and Protected Areas' 2023 mandate letter includes a commitment to "review Alberta's water management strategy to increase the availability of water and water licences to Alberta municipalities, businesses and agricultural producers while maintaining the highest standards of water conservation and treatment." This document provides an overview of the current water management system. It is intended to help prepare Albertans and water users for conversations on the opportunities and barriers that could be addressed within the system to better serve Albertans and make more water available for use.

Alberta's *Water Act*

Ownership of water is vested in the Crown as a natural resource managed for the benefit and use of all Albertans, whether on public or private land. The first water licence in Alberta was issued in 1894 by the federal government, who managed the water in Alberta until 1930, when responsibility for water in the province was transferred to Alberta. In 1931 the *Water Resources Act* was passed, establishing provincial legislation that continued the existing system of allocation and management. In 1999, the *Water Act* was passed, which updated the legislation and introduced new tools such as water management planning and the option to transfer water licences between users. The *Water Act* supports and promotes the conservation and management of water, including the wise allocation and use of water.

The *Water Act* regulates the diversion of water from surface and groundwater sources through various methods, including statutory rights for household and exempted agricultural purposes, registrations for traditional agriculture uses, and licences. Companies or individuals can apply for water licences to use water for a specified purpose, such as irrigation, energy production, or a municipal water system. A licence identifies the water source, location of the diversion site, quantity, rate, timing of withdrawal, priority date established by the licence and the conditions of the licence.

In Alberta's water allocation system, the oldest licences have the highest water use priority, or seniority. Some of the oldest and largest water licences in the province are held by irrigation districts and municipalities.

Water For Life

As Alberta's population and industry continues to grow, so has the demand for water. In 2003, responding to these pressures, the province engaged citizens and experts to create the Water for Life strategy. The Water for Life strategy outlines the Government of Alberta's commitments to manage and safeguard water resources and builds on the principles within the *Water Act*. The strategy's three main goals express the guiding management principles for water management outcomes in Alberta, which are:

- safe, secure drinking water supply,
- healthy aquatic ecosystems, and
- reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

Water management planning

The Government of Alberta uses a variety of planning tools to support the thoughtful management of water across the province, including:

- water management plans, and
- land-use plans and management frameworks.

Together, these initiatives consider emerging social, economic, and environmental water related pressures so that shared, desired and balanced water management outcomes can be developed.

Water management plans

Water management plans provide information about how water from a river basin is currently used and establishes shared management objectives through public consultation, including:

- approaches to protect instream flows,
- describing how water may be allocated,
- establishing water management thresholds, or
- enabling licence transfers.

Water management plans apply to streams, rivers, lakes, aquifers, and wetlands. An approved water management plan is a statutory plan and must be considered by a designated Director when making licence and approval decisions. Water management plans are put in place for basins that are prone to low flows, or areas where demand can sometimes outpace supply. Plan development is guided by the Framework for Water Management Planning.

A key component of water management plans are water management objectives and thresholds, which direct how specific uses and needs of water bodies are allocated for water users while protecting the environment.

A water conservation objective (WCO) is a flow or water level threshold that guides the allocation of water for new licences.

Instream objectives (IO) address local and regional concerns on a section of a river.

Neither a water management plan or a WCO is required to set water management thresholds .Licences issued individually have conditions intended to protect the aquatic environment, including where a plan or WCO does not yet provide specific objectives.

Land-use plans and management frameworks

The *Alberta Land Stewardship Act* allows the Government of Alberta, with the input and advice of Albertans, to identify the economic, social and environmental objectives for the province while recognizing regional context and differences. In Alberta, regional plans are aligned to watershed boundaries.

Alberta's Land-use Framework uses a cumulative effects management system that includes environmental management frameworks. Frameworks establish thresholds for identifying adverse impacts on the land and managed resources, guiding management actions to work within those limits.

The Government of Alberta develops surface water and groundwater management frameworks in collaboration with stakeholders, partners and Indigenous peoples to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and implement the frameworks. Water management frameworks:

- provide context for decisions about how existing and future activities involving water should be managed, and
- confirm regional objectives and establish ambient environmental limits and triggers.

The Lower Athabasca Region Surface Water Quantity Management Framework is an example of a framework related to water quantity.

Supporting policies

The *Water Act* provides a series of regulatory tools beyond water licences. Approvals, registrations, exemptions, codes of practices, directives, and other policies can apply in different circumstances when there are impacts to water or water bodies. Examples of supporting policies include:

- Surface Water Allocation Directive
- Water Conservation Policy for Upstream Oil and Gas Operations 2020
- Alberta Wetland Policy

Surface Water Allocation Directive

The Surface Water Allocation Directive provides guidance for water allocation decisions where specific water management objectives have not been established. The directive guides the allocation of water from rivers, lakes, and wetlands using a sustainable watershed approach that balances ecological and economic needs. It does not replace water management plans and water conservation objectives under the *Water Act*, environmental management frameworks under the *Alberta Land Stewardship Act*, or regional plans.

Water Conservation Policy for Upstream Oil and Gas Operations 2020

The Water Conservation Policy for Upstream Oil and Gas Operations in Alberta provides policy direction for water use in major upstream oil and gas operations where additional water conservation measures are feasible. The policy, which updates and expands on the original 2006 policy, prioritizes the use of alternative water sources over high-quality non-saline options, such as industrial or municipal wastewater and non-saline groundwater alternatives.

The Alberta Energy Regulator has reported that in-situ oil operations had a 48 percent decrease of non-saline water use between 2013 and 2022. This was due to the high rates of water recycling and the use of other alternatives to non-saline water. The same period shows a 46 percent decrease in water use intensity for enhanced oil recovery.

Alberta Wetland Policy

The Alberta Wetland Policy was approved in 2013 and implemented in 2015 and 2016. This policy emphasizes the importance of managing wetlands and created both tools and a platform to safeguard wetlands provincially. Mitigation provisions in the policy allow for collecting payment as a way of replacing wetlands, leading to funding to restore wetlands. The Alberta Water Council has stated that between 2015 and 2021, more than $35 million in dedicated wetland replacement funding has been collected for the approved loss of over 1,000 hectares of wetland.

The Wetland Replacement Program launched in 2020. In the inaugural year, restoration agencies replaced 158 hectares of wetlands, enabled by more than $3.7 million of wetland restoration funding. Achievements of the Wetland Replacement Program include:

- Development of technical policy guidance.
- Development of Best Management Practice guides in collaboration with forestry and energy industry companies.
- Delivery of outreach workshops to landowners.

Implementing the Alberta Wetland Policy has stimulated discussions about conserving and restoring wetlands, leading municipalities to forge new relationships with industry, developers and stewards.

Partnerships

One of the key directions in the Water for Life strategy is partnerships. Government of Alberta partners support various initiatives, including making advisory recommendations, hands-on stewardship efforts and integrated watershed management planning. Organizations such as the Alberta Water Council, Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils (WPACs), watershed stewardship groups, and other organizations are foundational to the successful implementation of the Water for Life strategy goals throughout the province.

Under Water for Life, WPACs work at the watershed level to support state of the watershed assessments and reporting, watershed management planning and literacy and education. WPACs also act as a convenor and collaborator for other stakeholders.

Additional partnerships like Alberta Lake Management Society, Land Stewardship Centre, and the Alberta Riparian Habitat Management Society (Cows & Fish) deliver activities like education and outreach, lake monitoring, watershed stewardship grant management and work with landowners.

Environment and Protected Areas also partners on projects, such as the WaterSHED Monitoring Program with the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance, EPCOR, and the City of Edmonton. By combining and coordinating resources a comprehensive river monitoring program has been created for the North Saskatchewan River. It encompasses 20 monitoring stations from the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan River to the Saskatchewan Border.

Partnerships help to effectively tackle the challenges of watershed management in Alberta, providing proactive approaches that help guide stewardship and prevent crisis situations.

Storage

An important aspect of managing water effectively is developing infrastructure that improves water availability using management projects such as dams, reservoirs, weirs, and canals or pipes. Dams on most major rivers in Alberta help level the very high fluctuations in natural water supply by storing runoff from melting snow and rains in the spring and early summer to supplement flows for the remainder of the year. They also capture large flows of water to reduce the impacts of floods and release accumulated stored water during periods of drought. Dams help provide consistent year-round water supply for communities such as Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and Edmonton, and for Alberta's irrigators during the warm and dry summer months.

The Government of Alberta owns and operates over $9 billion dollars of water management infrastructure ranging from major dams to comprehensive canal systems, pumping facilities, and lake stabilization projects. The Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is responsible for the safe operations, surveillance, and maintenance of these water management structures. All owners of water infrastructures, including privately owned and operated dams and weirs, must adhere to stringent regulatory requirements under the *Water Act* and the Dam and Canal Regulation and Directives. Public safety is a critical component of the operation, maintenance, and surveillance of major water projects.

Monitoring and forecasting

Our water management system uses knowledge and information metrics that indicate emerging trends and allow progress reporting on water management outcomes. This information is shared with the public to help them understand the state of water throughout the province.

Surface water quantity in rivers and streams is monitored through a network of over 400 hydrometric stations across the province, which are monitored in partnership with the Water Survey of Canada. This network includes stations that operate annually and those that operate seasonally (April to October). Over 60 lakes and reservoirs are monitored continuously, with additional manual monitoring by provincial staff and citizen scientists in more than 200 lakes and reservoirs The River Forecast Centre analyzes this data and provides Albertans with:

- short-term river forecasts to help communities prepare for the possibility of high flows or flooding,
- long-term river volume forecasts during the irrigation season, and
- low flow information to water licence holders to help them comply with licence terms and conditions.

Snowpack data is actively collected from over 100 alpine and plains sites as part of the Provincial Snow Survey network. This includes a network of snow pillows that report continuous snowpack data year-round, and a network of snow survey sites where snow depth is measured at monthly intervals throughout the winter and/or spring.

Surface water levels are shared through the Alberta Rivers webpage. Groundwater levels are monitored through the Groundwater Observation Well Network (GOWN) at over 300 sites, with near real-time information being available at over 50 sites.

Water quality is measured through the Long-term River Network and the Tributary Monitoring Network. Learn more about these networks in the Alberta's river water quality monitoring programs fact sheet.

Water-related risks

Alberta is no stranger to extreme events like floods and droughts. The government uses all available management tools to ensure that the water management system respects the priority licensing system, works with licensees to enable water sharing where possible, and operates provincial infrastructure to optimize available supply and reduce the risks to the greatest number of water users and others downstream.

Flood

The provincial government has worked to improve flood resilience for communities vulnerable to riverine flooding since the 1980s. Alberta has proactively worked to increase the safety of its residents and reduce individual, corporate, and taxpayer costs of flood recovery with the goal of minimizing the overall impacts and costs of flooding.

Alberta uses a multi-layered approach to flood resilience, guided by Respecting our rivers: Alberta's approach to flood mitigation. This includes watershed-level management, flood modelling, and warning systems. The Flood Hazard Identification Program identifies flood-prone areas across the province through detailed assessment studies along specific river reaches. The information is available through the Flood Awareness Map Application.

Drought

Drought is a period of critically low water supply caused by below-normal precipitation (snow and rain). It results in decreased surface water and groundwater supplies and soil moisture. There are different types of droughts, depending on factors such as precipitation, stream flows, lakes and reservoir levels, groundwater levels, soil moisture, and economic impacts. There are meteorological, agricultural, hydrological, and socio-economic types of drought.

In 2024, to ensure preparedness for the potential of widespread drought, Alberta prepared a Drought Response Plan that describes the preparation, planning, and response activities to address the full range of possible drought conditions. The plan compliments existing regional water shortage response plans and is intended to be proactive and flexible enough to address changing drought conditions as they occur.

Building resiliency

The Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program was established in 2014 to reduce the intensity, magnitude, duration, and effects of flood and drought through natural watershed mitigation measures. Municipalities, non-profit organizations, Indigenous communities, and other organizations can apply for funding for projects that will enhance communities' ability to withstand future flood or drought and promote the ongoing stewardship and preservation of Alberta's watersheds.

In 2024, the Drought and Flood Protection Program was announced. This is a multi-year grant program to help municipalities and Indigenous communities improve their long-term resilience to drought and floods events. The program helps fund the design and construction of projects that protect critical infrastructure from flooding and drought and helps protect public safety.

A changing climate

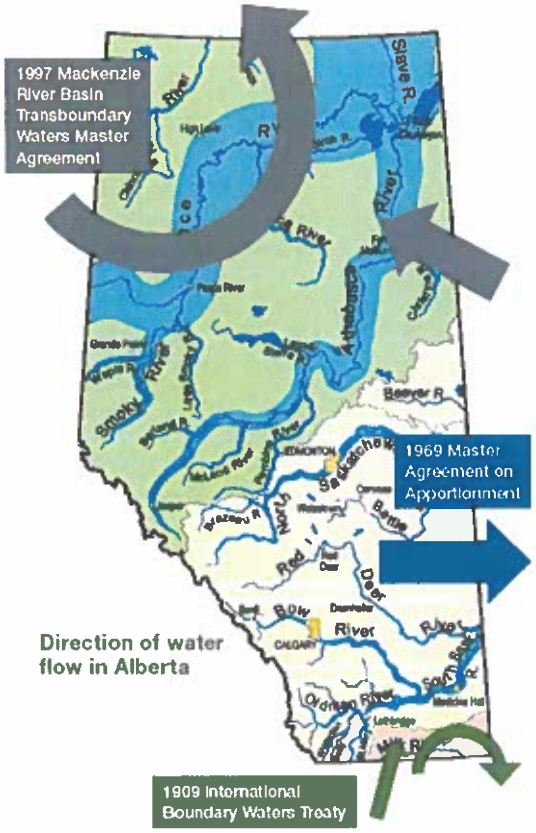
Long term changes in climate can lead to fluctuations in natural water availability. Across much of the province, summer temperatures have increased by +0.1 to +0.3°C per decade since 1950, and some regions have also seen significant increases in the frequency of warm days over 25 and 30°C. Greater changes are projected to occur over the rest of this century. As global temperatures rise, many climate indicators for Alberta are expected to increase but at a faster rate than other areas. The amount of precipitation falling as rain compared to snow is expected to increase, with more precipitation falling September through April.

Long-range forecasts predict a 50 percent increase in the number of very wet days (more than 25mm in 24 hours) and a 20 percent increase in the amount of precipitation on the wettest day of the year. There are several predicted changes in the timing, frequency, and magnitude of the precipitation during the growing season (May through August), with a considerable degree of uncertainty. Additionally, with a changing climate, increased evaporation and reduced soil moisture are expected. Changes will impact Alberta's seasonal water supply year-to-year.

Transboundary commitments

Alberta is required to share water with its neighbouring jurisdictions. Transboundary water agreements outline Alberta's obligations and entitlements for shared waters with Saskatchewan, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories, and the United States.

The Boundary Waters Treaty was signed in 1909 by Canada and the United States to address cross-border water issues and management within the St. Mary and Milk River basins. For Alberta, this treaty is significant because this water supports a substantial irrigation economy in the south of the province.



Classification: Public

The Master Agreement on Apportionment came into place in 1969 for water flowing east from Alberta into Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The purpose of the agreement is to apportion or share water equitably between the prairie provinces and to protect transboundary surface water quality and groundwater aquifers.

The Mackenzie River Basin Transboundary Waters Master Agreement was signed in 1997 and affects waters flowing in northern basins and includes waters shared with British Columbia, Northwest Territories, and Saskatchewan. Alberta and Northwest Territories have completed a bilateral agreement for their Mackenzie River basin watersheds.

Conclusion

With increasing water demand from economic and population growth and increased variability considering a changing climate, a resilient and efficient water management system is essential for safeguarding Alberta's community health, environment and economy.

Water is one of Alberta's most precious resources. Every one of us uses it, consumes it, and relies on it. Working together, we can find ways to make the most out of every drop.