



August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009

To: BCAC Member Organizations

From: Andy Dolberg

Re: Water Conservation Request – Thompson-Nicola, Okanagan, Similkameen, Kettle Regions, Vancouver Island, South Coast

The Province has asked the BCAC to update its members about the critical water shortages in the southern B.C. interior and coast regions, so we would ask for your participation in informing producers about the need to conserve water wherever possible for the remainder of the dry season.

Water levels are reportedly dropping rapidly in streams and aquifers due to low winter snowpacks and extremely dry weather patterns in the spring and summer. While there currently appears to be a temporary reprieve in some areas, weather predictions for the remainder of the summer are calling for continued hot, dry conditions. Some streams have already reached their lowest flows on record for this date. The attached water advisories provide more detail on low flow conditions in the Thompson-Nicola and Okanagan regions, as well as information on sector-specific impacts.

Communities, businesses, agriculture, ecosystems and individuals in these regions will all be impacted as water supplies decrease. The Province has been working with local governments and industry on an action plan to manage the impacts of declining water availability, and may consider imposing mandatory water extraction restrictions using the provincial *Water Act* and federal *Fisheries Act* to address water use. However, we are told that the Province remains optimistic that successful voluntary actions could avert the need for such measures.

**We are therefore asking you to help us circulate information to producers regarding water use reduction through voluntary water conservation measures.** Any efforts that are made now will help prolong water availability both for water users and aquatic ecosystems.

For more information about B.C.'s water supply situation and about helping communities, industry and agriculture deal with drought, please visit the B.C. government's drought web page at [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/public\\_safety/drought\\_info/index.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wsd/public_safety/drought_info/index.html) .

Water is a critical resource for agriculture and conserving water is everyone's responsibility, even more so in times of water shortage. Thank you for your cooperation in this request.

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