

Karine Keys

From: Government of Alberta <epa.water@gov.ab.ca>
Sent: October 31, 2024 4:32 PM
To: Karine Keys
Subject: Water availability engagement



October 31, 2024

Dear Municipal Leaders:

I am writing to inform you of the launch of an engagement to identify opportunities and understand barriers to improve water management and make more water available for use.

Population growth, economic growth and water variability are challenging the water management system in Alberta. New policy and regulatory tools, including potential amendments to the *Water Act*, 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.

The water priority and licence seniority system in Alberta – reflecting the principles of first in time, first in right – is not proposed to change. The goal is to engage on how Alberta can best:

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

Feedback over the years has also identified some initial opportunities to explore, including:

- improving measuring and reporting on water use and availability;
- enhancing water conservation, efficiency, and productivity;
- improving water allocation and transfers to accommodate need and demand;
- clarifying use of rainwater;
- identifying opportunities and barriers for using alternative sources of water and wastewater reuse;

- 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.

Environment and Protected Areas is open to feedback on any opportunity or barrier that needs to be addressed to enhance the water management system in Alberta and make more water available for use.

For more specific information, please visit the online engagement page at [//alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement](https://alberta.ca/water-availability-engagement). We appreciate you sharing your ideas around the opportunities and barriers to enhancing water management and availability by:

- Completing an online survey. Online surveys will be available soon to share your thoughts on increasing water availability.
- Meeting with department staff. We are planning meetings with sectors and regions, including public engagement. Please email epa.water@gov.ab.ca to confirm interest in participating.
- Sharing your ideas with others through the online ideas board. You can post a new idea, like, or comment on other ideas.
- If you have questions, you are welcome to ask a question online about water management in Alberta, where the department will post the questions and responses.

If you have any questions, please let us know. We have established a specific email – epa.water@gov.ab.ca – to support this engagement. If there are additional members of your organization that you would like to receive updates directly on this engagement and future water initiatives, please reach out to epa.water@gov.ab.ca to confirm their name, position, and organization to be added to our distribution list.

We look forward to hearing from you, and thank you in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Kate Rich

Assistant Deputy Minister

Water and Circular Economy Division

Environment and Protected Areas