



September 18, 2008

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Dear Reader,

The Alberta Water Council is a stakeholder partnership that provides leadership, expertise and advocacy, to engage and empower individuals, organizations, businesses and governments to achieve the outcomes of the *Water for Life* strategy.

Consensus decision-making is a core value of the Council and the adopted model chosen to guide negotiations between 25 sectors representing all Albertans. The Council follows process guidelines that provide opportunities for all participants to work together to find solutions that are in the best interest of everyone. Whenever possible, the Council provides consensus-based advice and recommendations to the Government of Alberta and other stakeholders on water management issues, in accordance with the goals, strategies, and actions set out in its business plan.

In 2005, the Council established the Wetland Policy Project team to develop a provincial wetland policy and implementation plan they could recommend to the Government of Alberta. *Alberta Water Council Recommendations for a New Alberta Wetland Policy* and *Alberta Water Council Recommendations for an Alberta Wetland Policy Implementation Plan* are the result of three years of significant collaboration between members of the Wetland Policy Project Team. Their work was supported by extensive consultation with government, non-government and industry sectors. These documents provide recommendations and strategies for protecting, sustaining and restoring Alberta's wetlands.

In June 2008, the Wetland Policy Project Team submitted their final documents to the Board of Directors for approval. The Board agreed to defer a final decision on the documents until September 2008 to allow members time to ratify the documents within their sector.



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At closing of the response date, 23 of the Council's 25 sectors fully supported all of the ideas and actions recommended in the documents. Two sectors could not support all aspects of the policy and implementation plan, but supported most of the content. The Council received letters from the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, representing the oil and gas sector, and the Alberta Chamber of Resources, representing the mining sector outlining their concerns with the documents.

When issues of non-consensus arise, Council process requires parties to, in writing, to identify the particular items they cannot support and propose alternative solutions that would make them acceptable. This information is then distributed to Council members for review and, if desired, response. Response letters provide members an opportunity to state their opinion on the alternatives presented and ensure their views are also heard. The Council received one response letter written on behalf of all of the members of NGO community on Council.

In September, *Alberta Water Council Recommendations for a New Alberta Wetland Policy* and *Alberta Water Council Recommendations for a New Alberta Wetland Policy Implementation Plan* will be presented to the Minister of Environment as non-consensus documents. The Minister will review all material provided by the Council including the letters of non-consensus, the response letter, and the letter of transmittal from the Council's Executive Committee. We expect that it will take the Minister some time to complete a thorough review and respond.

As a matter of transparency, the letters of non-consensus and the response letter are posted on the Council's website alongside the recommended policy and implementation plan. The letter of transmittal from the Alberta Water Council Executive to the Minister is also available at www.AWChome.ca

The Government of Alberta is responsible for developing and implementing a wetland policy. The advice provided, to the Government of Alberta, in *Alberta Water Council Recommendations for a New Alberta Wetland Policy* and *Alberta Water Council Recommendations for a New Alberta Wetland Policy Implementation Plan* is based on extensive consultation and discussion with government, non-government organizations and industry on issues, challenges

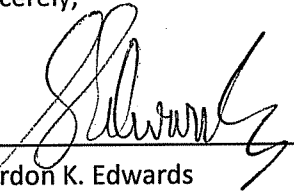


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and opportunities related to wetland protection, sustainability and restoration. Development of these documents would not have been possible without the commitment, time and expertise provided by participants over the last three years.

We believe that these recommendations provide the Government of Alberta with strategic direction and the necessary tools to make wise choices about our wetlands now and into the future.

Sincerely,



Gordon K. Edwards
Executive Director