

# Alberta Water Council

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CHAIR:

Peter Watson

MEMBERS:

Nicholas Bayliss

Bill Berzins

Gerald Cunningham

John Donner

Danielle Droitsch

Brian Hammond

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Al Kennedy

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

May 1, 2007

### Review finds province is leading the way with *Water for Life*, but more needs to be done

*Calgary* ... Increasing public awareness and increasing and better targeting funding are two key areas of improvement that can make a good thing even better, according to a comprehensive, objective review of the province's *Water for Life* strategy.

In the *Review of Implementation Progress of Water for Life, 2005-2006*, released May 1 by the Alberta Water Council – a multi-stakeholder, consensus-based organization responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the water strategy – the Council states good progress is being made on *Water for Life*, but by focusing more on a few areas, Alberta can ensure its approach and practices on water management and use are not only sustainable, but are world class.

“Alberta is on the cusp of something great with *Water for Life*,” said Bill Berzins, Chair of the Bow River Basin Council and one of the co-chairs of the Alberta Water Council. “The actions of the first three years have established a foundation for future initiatives, and now it is vital that the province takes full advantage of the increased funding that has been committed in the past year.”

Ron Pearson, the Council member who led the review team, said the Government of Alberta deserves recognition for this progress, but noted that significant challenges also remain.

“We believe it is now the opportune time to renew and resource the *Water for Life* strategy and commit sustained financial support to ensure its success,” said Pearson, who serves as a non-governmental organization representative on the Council on behalf of Trout Unlimited Canada.

The Council also recommends that an increase in public awareness and understanding on water issues and conservation should continue to be a key priority, as it is an activity that not only impacts all of the other initiatives, but it is also one that can net short-term results.

“In the long run, we believe the wise use of water, through the effective management of demand is a critical component in the success of effectively managing our water supplies,” said the Council’s Industry Co-Chair Dave Hill, who is also the Executive Director of Alberta Irrigation Projects. “We need to change how we all think about and how we all use our water supply – if we don’t, all of the other investments and activities will not make a significant difference in sustaining this valuable and limited resource.”

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The Secretariat for the Alberta Water Council is located at:

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This is the second formal review on Water for Life by the Council since it was established in 2004.

Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner said he is pleased that an objective, multi-stakeholder review of *Water for Life* shows good progress is being made and that the actions and investments to date are making a difference.

“The Government of Alberta is committed to *Water for Life*, and the role of the Alberta Water Council in monitoring the actions and progress is vital to ensuring we maintain momentum, and continue to do the right things for Alberta and Albertans,” Renner said. “Building from the foundation of this review, I look forward to the getting more specific recommendations from the Council and key stakeholders as it leads the process to fulfill Premier Stelmach’s mandate to renew the strategy.”

The Council will be announcing details of the *Water for Life* Renewal Process in early June, including specific information on how stakeholders and the public can provide input.

“Based on the recent review, combined with a number of other reviews by other organizations that have been done over the past three years, the Council feels that *Water for Life* is a strong, sound and appropriate water management strategy for Alberta,” said Berzins. “However, we could see areas for further action and improvement based on our review, and now we feel it is important to seek out the ideas and input of others who are actively involved, and who have a vested interest, in the sustainability and safety of Alberta’s water supply.”

The Alberta Water Council was appointed in May 2004 to monitor and provide direction and advice to the government, stakeholders and the public around the implementation of the province's *Water for Life* strategy. Under its mandate, Council members, along with watershed planning and advisory councils and watershed stewardship groups, makes recommendations to government, stakeholders and the public on improving water management throughout Alberta's watersheds. At the request of any of its member organizations, the Council will also examine and prioritize the province's existing policies and emerging water issues.

More information on the Council, including the complete *Review of Implementation Progress on Water for Life, 2005-2006* report, can be found at

[www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/awc](http://www.waterforlife.gov.ab.ca/awc)

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**For more information, contact:**

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