



NEWS RELEASE

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More action, focused investment needed to renew *Water for Life*

Edmonton ... Accelerating action and investment, and taking stronger, bolder steps to safeguard Alberta's water sources are two key areas where the government needs to focus its efforts if it wants to renew and refresh the *Water for Life* strategy, according to the Alberta Water Council.

The Council, the multi-stakeholder group established to oversee and steward the implementation of *Water for Life*, released a report January 30 outlining recommendations to update the four-year-old provincial water strategy. The report is in response to Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner's request to the Council for input to help fulfill Premier Ed Stelmach's 2006 mandate to renew and resource the provincial water strategy.

In its report, the Council states the government has made excellent progress with some short-term actions to achieve the three outcomes of *Water for Life* – safe, secure drinking water; healthy aquatic ecosystems; and reliable, quality water supply for a prosperous economy. However, more work needs to be done in all three areas, but especially around safeguarding Alberta's water supply and aquatic environment.

“Overall we believe the government deserves credit for undertaking and defining *Water for Life*, but now, more than ever, we must be bold and truly innovative if we are to ensure Alberta's water supply is both safe and sustainable,” said Ron Pearson, a Council member representing non-governmental organizations, and a member of the Steering Committee for the renewal report.

“Albertans' expectations for *Water for Life* are high,” said Council member Kevin Stashin, an industry representative on Council who also served on the renewal Steering Committee “Focusing resources and putting true “muscle” in a few strategic areas is vital if the province wants to advance the strategy as a whole.”

The Council recommends renewing the strategy around safeguarding the province's water sources, and increasing the ability of all partners and users to better manage and conserve water in Alberta. Some specific recommendations include:

- Addressing aquatic ecosystem degradation.
- Integrating water and land management.
- Creating, enhancing and using innovative tools and best practices.
- Clarifying roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Enhancing data collection, analysis and reporting.
- Expanding public awareness programs to build shared commitment.

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“Alberta’s *Water for Life* strategy is the foundation for important water management decisions in our province,” said Alberta Environment Minister Rob Renner in accepting the report. “I am extremely happy with the effort put in by the Water Council and I look forward to reviewing their recommendations.”

The Council has twice reviewed the government’s progress in implementing *Water for Life* since the strategy was unveiled in 2003. The *2006 Review Report* served as the starting point for the renewal initiative. To supplement and validate its 2006 review, the Council invited input from key stakeholders and the public before preparing the recommendations in its new report.

A copy of the Council’s *Water for Life: Recommendations for Renewal*, including a summary of input received through its 2007 consultation with Albertans, can be found at www.albertawatercouncil.ca

Established in 2004, the Alberta Water Council is a multi-stakeholder partnership with 24 members from governments, industry, and non-government organizations. Its primary task is to monitor and steward implementation of Alberta’s Water for Life strategy and to champion achievement of the strategy’s three outcomes of a safe, secure drinking water supply, healthy aquatic ecosystems, and reliable, quality water supplies for a sustainable economy.

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