

November 4, 2005

Province works on flood damage reduction strategy

Edmonton... The Alberta government is developing a long-term strategy to reduce flood damage.

The province has established an interdepartmental Flood Risk Management Committee to develop a strategy to better manage and mitigate against flood damage. George Groeneveld, MLA for Highwood, will chair the committee that will include staff from the ministries of Infrastructure and Transportation, Environment, and Municipal Affairs, and support from a number of other ministries.

"While we can't control the forces of nature, we can certainly be proactive and take measures to reduce the damage, expense, and inconvenience of floods," said Dr. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

Minister of Environment Guy Boutilier expressed his strong support for the initiative.

"Alberta Environment plays an important role in flood preparations by providing accurate and timely information to municipalities and other authorities," said Boutilier. "This initiative will further enhance that effort by bringing together each department's expertise to help further protect Albertans."

The committee will examine measures such as: expanded flood risk assessment to gain better information for flood forecasting, mitigation, and emergency response; flood mitigation works; and adopting measures that curtail development in flood-prone areas. The committee is under the direction of a Ministerial Task Force that includes Oberg, Boutilier, and Municipal Affairs Minister Rob Renner. The committee will present its findings to the task force in early 2006.

"The recent floods have shown the need to review our flood mitigation and response strategies," said Renner. "By working with municipalities on careful land-use planning and effective flood response, we can continue to take the steps needed to help keep Albertans and their property safe."

"I'm very pleased to be involved with this initiative," said Groeneveld. "The floods of 2005 make it clear that this province needs to look at better ways to deal with these events."

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