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Additional funds flow for regional water and wastewater systems

Edmonton... The Alberta government will invest more than a quarter-billion dollars, including \$100 million in new funding, into an initiative that encourages the development of regional water and wastewater systems.

The *Water for Life* - Regional Water and Wastewater Partnership Initiative was launched in spring 2006 with an original budget of \$54 million. As announced with the Second Quarter Fiscal Update the Government injected an additional \$100 million into the program on top of the \$100 million announced in August. This brings the total available for regional water initiatives to \$254 million.

"Regional water systems are another example of how government and communities work together to provide safe, secure drinking water for Albertans," said Ty Lund, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "Alberta's municipal drinking water already exceeds national standards and our goal is to make sure this continues."

Regional systems make economic sense because they eliminate the need for smaller communities with limited resources to build, maintain, and operate expensive facilities. The initiative encourages the development of regional water and wastewater systems by having the Alberta government pick up 90 per cent of the capital costs of the regional pipeline.

The initiative, as well as the Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership, is part of the overall *Water for Life* Strategy adopted by the Alberta government in 2003. It also contributes to the province's rural development initiatives.

"A safe and secure drinking water system is a priority of this government and of Albertans," said Guy Boutilier, Minister of Environment. "Investments like this in regional water systems are another example of breathing life into our *Water for Life* Strategy and making the plan a reality."

In addition to this regional initiative, the Alberta government will invest \$126 million in 2006-09 for regular Alberta Municipal Water/Wastewater Partnership grants.

Existing regional water and wastewater systems currently serve 150 Alberta communities.

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