

May 24, 2024

Dear Water Licence Holder,

**Subject: Notice of Activation for the Southern Tributaries Water-Sharing Agreement**

This letter is to notify you that the water-sharing agreement between major water users in the Southern Tributaries (Waterton, Belly and St. Mary Rivers) was activated on May 9, 2024. You have been identified as a water licence holder affected by this activation and are being asked to immediately begin voluntary water conservation to match those being taken by signatories of this agreement.

In April, you would have received a letter from Minister Rebecca Schulz detailing Alberta’s proactive and risk-based approach to managing the stage four drought conditions in Alberta. This approach involves the adoption of water-sharing agreements (WSAs) among the largest water licence holders in each basin, with the goal of ensuring all users have access to meet their water use needs. These basins are:

- Bow River Basin
- Red Deer River Basin
- Oldman South Saskatchewan River Basin
- Southern Tributaries

Signatories of each water-sharing agreement meet bi-weekly to determine if conditions require activation of their agreement and/or to identify specific actions signatories agree to take. To maximize the effectiveness of these agreements for all water users, Minister Schulz asked all water licence holders to match the water conservation actions being taken through the relevant water-sharing agreement.

On May 9, 2024, the signatories agreed to the conservation reductions outlined in the table below. As a non-signatory licensee that withdraws water from a source contributing to the Southern Tributaries of the Oldman River (i.e., Waterton, Belly, and St. Mary Rivers) we are asking you to reduce your water use as outlined in the third column.

Sector	Conservation Reductions by Signatories	Conservation Reductions by Non-Signatories
<b>Private Irrigation</b> (including those with irrigation type activities, like golf courses).	Irrigation districts pulling from the Oldman and South Saskatchewan Systems agree to 8 inches/acre (approximately 50% of their allocation)	All other private irrigators not part of the irrigation districts but also pulling water from the Southern Tributaries, reduce to 8 inches/acre or approximately 50% of your allocation.
<b>Municipal Uses</b>	Reduce consumption by 5-10% compared to expected 2024 summer demand (May to October)	Reduce consumption by 5-10% from ideal use for this time of year over the period May to October
<b>Other Uses</b> (Industrial, Commercial, Agricultural, etc.)	N/A – no signatories representing these uses in this basin	Reduce consumption to the minimum volume needed to maintain operations
Licensees should continue to adhere to the conditions of their licence (e.g., rate of diversion, timing, and instream flow restrictions, retaining and/or submitting water use records)		

We encourage you to refer to [Alberta.ca/Drought](http://Alberta.ca/Drought) for up-to-date information about the status of water-sharing agreements, drought conditions, and resources available to you. The website will be updated with guidance to support your planning and decision-making, including templates to guide your water reduction planning, and guidance for assessing your water use.

Environment and Protected Areas staff will be in the field this summer to monitor drought conditions and answer your questions.

If you need assistance related to your licence or licence conditions, locating your nearest irrigation district, water conservation expectations, please contact (403) 381-5546 or [epa.drought-response@gov.ab.ca](mailto:epa.drought-response@gov.ab.ca).

Please visit [Your.Alberta.ca/Drought](http://Your.Alberta.ca/Drought) to update your water licence contact information and email address.

Yours truly,

Coreen Bates  
Oldman South Saskatchewan Milk River Basin Lead