

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: May 22, 2025

RE: **Funding Small Water Systems for Rural Communities in BC**

Administrative Recommendation:

THAT the Board authorize the Chair to co-sign a joint letter with the Chairs of the Comox Valley and Thompson-Nicola Regional Districts, advocating for increased funding and support for small water systems in rural British Columbia.

Purpose:

To seek Board authorization for the Chair to co-sign a joint letter with the Chairs of the Comox Valley and Thompson-Nicola Regional Districts, advocating for increased and sustained funding support for small water systems serving rural communities in British Columbia

Background:

Small water systems are critical to the health and sustainability of rural communities across British Columbia. These systems often face significant challenges, including aging infrastructure, limited financial and technical capacity, and increasing regulatory requirements. Without adequate support, many of these systems are at risk of failure, posing serious public health and environmental risks.

The Comox Valley, Thompson-Nicola and the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen have initiated a collaborative effort to bring attention to this issue at the provincial level. A letter will be drafted addressed to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Health, requesting targeted funding programs and policy support for small water systems in rural areas.

The letter will include the following key challenges faced by small rural water systems:

- Unsustainable Financial Burdens
- Lack of Operational Funding
- Public Health Risks
- Inability to Amalgamate or Expand

The letter will ask the province to consider various actions which would include.

- Establish Long-term Sustainable Funding Programs
- Tailor Regulations and Cost-Sharing Models
- Capacity-Building Initiatives

Alternatives:

THAT the Board does not authorize the Chair to co-sign a joint letter with the Chairs of the Comox Valley and Thompson-Nicola Regional Districts, advocating for increased funding and support for small water systems in rural British Columbia.

Will a PowerPoint presentation be presented at the meeting? No

Respectfully submitted:

"Jim Zaffino"

J. Zaffino, Chief Administrative Officer