



June 11, 2026

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To: Improvement District

Re: Provincial Expertise Available from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food to Support Decisions Related to Water Restrictions

Further to Housing and Municipal Affairs Circular 26:09 that was distributed on May 7, 2026, about preparation for water scarcity and drought conditions, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is available to collaborate with local governments and irrigation districts to discuss their location-specific needs and impacts of decision-making to the local agricultural community over the summer growing season.

Snowpack and water storage is below normal in several areas of the province, with the impacts most pronounced in the south and central interior, south coast, and island regions. Farmers and ranchers are having to manage cumulative impacts from consecutive years of drought that have long-term impact on their business operations and food security for British Columbians.

Professional Expertise is Available

If your improvement district is considering making water restriction decisions that have impacts on farmers and ranchers and want to understand what the agricultural and economic impacts are, the ministry has a team of water experts and Professional Agrologists that are available to provide advice. Ministry staff can provide information about what types of agriculture are mostly predominant in your area, what the water needs are, and what water saving strategies can be used now to minimize disruption to the agricultural community.

The Ministry has regional staff located in all of the primary agricultural areas across all commodities, and they can be reached directly as follows:

- Northeast: Brenna Schilds, Brenna.Schilds@gov.bc.ca
- Skeena: John Stevenson, John.J.Stevenson@gov.bc.ca



- Cariboo: Nicole Pressey, Nicole.Pressey@gov.bc.ca
- Omineca: Karen Tabe, Karen.Tabe@gov.bc.ca
- South Coast: Andrew Vogler, Andrew.Vogler@gov.bc.ca
- West Coast: Andrea Shaw, Andrea.E.Shaw@gov.bc.ca
- Thompson Okanagan: Will Shaw, William.Shaw@gov.bc.ca
- Kootenay Boundary: Jeffrey Nimmo, Jeffrey.Nimmo@gov.bc.ca

Thank you for your ongoing collaboration, and if you would like to discuss any specific needs or challenges related to water scarcity, drought, and how it impacts the agricultural community in your area, please contact me directly at paul.squires@gov.bc.ca.

Thank you for your collaboration,

Paul Squires
Assistant Deputy Minister, Programs and Sector Resilience
Ministry of Agriculture and Food