



August 29, 2023

File: D2023

Savary Shores Improvement District  
 administrator@savaryshoreswater.ca

Dear Water Licence Applicant,

**Re: Request for Reduction of Water Use in Response to Drought Level 5**

The South Coast Region is currently amid severe drought conditions. Most areas of the South Coast Region have been elevated to a **Drought Level 5**. We are requesting all water users to voluntarily conserve water and reduce withdrawals from surface water and groundwater sources for the remainder of the season to protect socio-economic and ecosystem values:

- **Existing Use Groundwater Applicants: reduce water use by 50% or more**
- **Remainder of Water Licence Applicants: stop using water**

The current drought conditions and continued high water withdrawals significantly increase the stress on fish populations. Minimizing water use now will help reduce the likelihood of further declines in stream flows, which will ultimately benefit all users, fish populations and aquatic habitats. All water users need to do their part of reduce the impacts on the resource.

Should water levels fall below critical low flows (e.g. flows below which significant or adverse impacts will occur to aquatic species), further regulatory action may be taken under the *Water Sustainability Act*, such as Temporary Protection Orders or other Orders that require stopping water diversion.

Level	Impacts	General Response Measures
0	There is sufficient water to meet socio-economic and ecosystem needs	Preparedness
1	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>rare</b>	Conservation
2	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>unlikely</b>	Conservation Local water restrictions where appropriate
3	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>possible</b>	Conservation Local water restrictions likely
4	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>likely</b>	Conservation and local water restrictions Regulatory action possible
5	Adverse impacts to socio-economic or ecosystem values are <b>almost certain</b>	Conservation and local water restrictions Regulatory action likely Possible emergency response

**Existing Use Groundwater Applicants**

As a reminder, if you are a non-domestic Existing Use Groundwater user (EUGW, those who had used groundwater prior to February 29, 2016) you may continue to divert and beneficially use water at this time as you did prior to February 29, 2016 if an existing-use groundwater user application was submitted prior to March 1, 2022. However, we request that you voluntarily **reduce your water use by 50% or more** for the remainder of the drought season to reduce the likelihood of the Province taking regulatory action under the WSA to address critically low flows, such as Orders that require stopping water diversion.

### **Surface Water or New Use Groundwater Applicants**

As a reminder, if you have applied for a Surface Water or New Use Groundwater licence, and have not yet obtained a water licence, you are not authorized to use water. If you are using that water, you must **stop until you receive a water licence**. Under Section 6 of the WSA, a person must not divert water from a stream or groundwater source unless the person holds an authorization or other authority for that use and regulatory action may be taken to require water use to stop (e.g. and Order).

You may also wish to check with provincial staff if your water use may be exempt from requiring a licence (e.g. some surface water domestic use, and all groundwater domestic use).

### **Flow Monitoring and Drought Levels**

Provincial water staff continue to closely monitor river levels, ecosystems, and weather forecasts. For more information on drought please visit the drought information website (<http://bit.ly/BCDroughtPortal>). This website provides drought updates, a link to the drought portal, effects of drought, suggestions on how to deal with drought, an overview map of the drought levels for the province, and any angling closures.

I would like to thank you in advance for your efforts to conserve water and help protect water resources for future use and ensure the continued health of important aquatic habitats.

Yours truly,



Emily Elsliger  
Assistant Water Manager