

OBWB POLICY - DISPOSITION OF CROWN LANDS SURROUNDING DRINKING WATER RESERVOIRS IN THE OKANAGAN WATERSHED

07 July 2009

WHEREAS,

- A. Access to clean water is deemed essential for human populations as well as for life more generally; and
- B. An adequate supply of water is fundamental to the economic vitality and quality of life enjoyed by inhabitants of the Okanagan Basin today and in the future; and
- C. The Okanagan Basin is classified as a semi-arid environment, to large degree, and therefore is susceptible to natural water-related stresses arising from seasonal and annual weather variability as well as long-term trends in climate change; and
- D. The population of the Okanagan Basin is anticipated to increase in the foreseeable future with associated pressures exerted on water resources and water supply systems; and
- E. A significant proportion of the annual water supply available to inhabitants of the Okanagan Basin is stored in drinking water reservoirs that are managed to some degree by humans, and therefore such reservoirs constitute an integral component of the water-supply infrastructure of the Okanagan region; and
- F. It is anticipated that extra storage capacity in existing and new reservoirs will be required (and added) in the future to accommodate increasing demand; and
- G. The presence and conduct of human-related activities (including the occupation of seasonal or permanent dwellings) on existing crown land in close proximity to or directly within drinking water reservoirs is potentially detrimental—whether incidental, accidental, or by consequence—to the overall integrity and well-being of the water resources and aquatic and riparian ecosystems sustained by those reservoirs; and
- H. The OBWB deems it desirable not to foreclose on any and all water and land management options, tools, and strategies currently available to secure the sustainable future of water resources in the Okanagan Basin; and
- I. In some cases, existing leases have been accompanied by significant investment in improvements, inter-generational occupation, and responsible stewardship of the land and surrounding environment, and that implementation of this Policy, while causing hardship to certain individuals is performed in the service of the greater public good.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The OBWB supports and encourages keeping existing Crown Lands that are proximal to drinking water reservoirs in the public domain so as to maximize the potential for flexible management strategies of these critical lands with the intent of ensuring a sustainable supply of high quality water for the entire Okanagan Basin in perpetuity; and**
- 2. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the OBWB opposes the sale or disposition of Crown Lands adjacent to or in near proximity to drinking water reservoirs in the Okanagan watershed into private occupation, and moreover encourages the lapse of existing leases on such proximal lands without possibility for renewal.**