

Water commission proposed

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A new B.C. water commission to streamline water use reporting and connect water licence rental fees with water management needs is being proposed by the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Such a commission would be self-funded and would also be able to provide grants for water projects with only slight increase in current water license fees, according to an independent business case prepared by accounting firm Grant Thornton.

"Currently, reporting of licensed water use in B.C. is collected ineffectively if at all," said Nelson Jatel, OBWB's water stewardship director.

"However, this new water use reporting software developed by the OBWB in partnership with the province, and now used in the Okanagan and Nanaimo, would allow information on major groundwater and surface water extractions to be gathered efficiently from all over B.C. The software also allows utilities and others involved in water management to use the data for planning and managing the resource."

Looking at the finer details, OBWB says a staff of 10 could provide core services.

"Not only would licence fees cover the cost of the commission's operation without loss of general revenue to the province, but there would be enough left over for a sustainable water management grant program of about \$5 million a year."

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