



JUN 18 2018

Referred To CAO Chair

Reference: 238749

June 15, 2018

Chair Margo Wagner
Cariboo Regional District
Suite D - 180 N 3rd Avenue
Williams Lake, British Columbia
V2G 2A4

Dear Chair Wagner:

Thank you for your letter regarding the challenges faced by agricultural dam owners due to costs associated with dam safety requirements, some of which may increase due to factors outside of the dam owner's control.

Secure water sources, supported by safe water storage, are fundamental to all sectors of the economy and the livelihoods of all British Columbians. Dams are key water storage infrastructure that require ongoing maintenance and periodic upgrading to provide the water supplies that support agricultural businesses. Recommendations from independent reviews of two significant dam failures, Cannon Creek Dam near Quesnel in 1995 and Testalinden Dam near Oliver in 2010, have helped to establish dam safety roles and requirements that protect the assets and water supplies of dam owners while reducing risk to the public, property and environmental values.

We recognize that certain requirements, such as dam safety reviews (DSRs) and the subsequent upgrades to dams that may be required can result in significant costs for dam owners. The ten year period between DSRs for high consequence dams is intended to allow dam owners to plan for these costs and upgrades over a number of years. To help reduce these costs, the Dam Safety Program has applied for funding from the National Disaster Mitigation Program to undertake a series of regional analyses that will result in consistent data and improved methods for DSRs. These new datasets will be made available to dam safety professionals and should reduce the complexity of analysis and associated costs of conducting hydrotechnical studies for DSRs.

Downstream development that is outside of the dam owner's control does present a significant challenge, and can result in changes to the consequence classification of the dam that increase requirements and costs for dam owners. Under the *Land Act*, approving officers in local governments and the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure have authority to consider a variety of hazards and impacts to other landowners and agriculture when making subdivision approval decisions. The Dam Safety Program is exploring the extent of these powers with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure subdivision approving officers,

Page 1 of 2

Chair Margo Wagner

with the objective of developing guidance for approving officers when making subdivision approval decisions that could impact a dam owner.

When dams are constructed and reservoirs are established, significant changes are made to the natural landscape, habitats and hydrology of a watershed. Over time, other uses and values also become associated with these water features. Under the *Water Sustainability Act*, water licence holders who use the same works (including dams) can enter into a Joint Works Agreement that can address sharing of costs associated with operating, maintaining and upgrading the works. There is currently no mechanism or program in place to require non-water-licence holders who benefit from a reservoir to contribute to the costs associated with the dam.

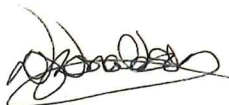
In our experience, when a water licence holder no longer needs the water and initiates the process to abandon a licence and decommission the dam, other stakeholders may become involved and choose to apply to take over the licence under a different water-use purpose to preserve the values associated with the reservoir. Given this experience, it is conceivable that arrangements could be made at the local level for various beneficiaries of a reservoir to contribute financially to the costs of maintaining the dam. However, with over 1600 regulated dams, and associated reservoirs in the province, it is not possible for the ministry to coordinate cost-sharing among all stakeholders that value these reservoirs.

The Dam Safety Program has continued to work with the Ministry of Agriculture to provide dam safety training to agricultural dam owners based on the resources developed in 2016 under the Climate Action Initiative in partnership with the BC Cattlemen's Association. In March 2018, the ministry contracted Interior Dams, a dam safety consulting firm, to deliver four workshops to agricultural dam owners in the Peace, Thompson and Okanagan regions.

The Dam Safety Program is committed to continuing to develop knowledge transfer resources and deliver training to agricultural dam owners. We are also committed to continuing to work with the Ministry of Agriculture, the Canadian Dam Safety Association, and stakeholders to raise awareness about dam safety requirements, improve dam safety practices and develop resources to support dam owners and dam safety professionals.

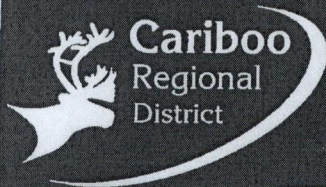
Again, thank you for taking the time to express your views.

Sincerely,



Doug Donaldson
Minister

pc: Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture



Cariboo
Regional
District

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

Suite D, 180 N Third Avenue, Williams Lake, BC V2G 2A4

Tel: 250-392-3351 TF: 1-800-665-1636

Fax: 250-392-2812

File: 400-20

April 12, 2018

The Honourable Doug Donaldson
Minister Forests, Lands & Natural Resource Operations
& Rural Development
PO Box 9049, STN PROV GOVT
Victoria, BC V8W 9E2

Dear Minister Donaldson:

Re: Agricultural Dams

In 2017 the Cariboo Regional District proposed, and the membership of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) endorsed, the following resolution:

"Whereas agricultural dams are significant resources for water storage for food producers in certain regions of British Columbia, and climate change with temperature increases and hydrological shifts will make these water sources even more important in future;

And whereas the Dam Safety Regulation specifies requirements for owners to hire engineers to inspect and develop plans to maintain these dams based on the level of risk;

And whereas these requirements are complex, onerous, and prohibitively expensive to dam owners, and the level of risk depends in part on development downstream which is beyond the control of the dam owner;

And whereas agricultural dams provide shared values to society, including recreational values, ecological values as they provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and water sources for forest firefighting;

Therefore it be resolved that UBCM call on the Province to work with agricultural dam owners to assist them in meeting the requirements of the Dam Safety Regulation in order that these water storage resources are safely preserved for food production and other values into the future:

And be it further resolved that UBCM request the Province to fairly apportion the cost of inspecting and maintaining agricultural dams in a manner which takes into account other shared values, and the level of development downstream from the dams."

.../2

building communities together

The Provincial Response for our resolution was provided by the Ministry of Agriculture. Their responses was as follows:

“The Ministry of Agriculture (AGRI) in collaboration with the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNR) have been working with agricultural dam owners to promote effective dam safety practices in British Columbia.

As the regulator of dam safety for freshwater dams in BC, FLNR refers to the Canadian Dam Association Guidelines as the basis for dam safety requirements. All dam owners are subject to the same requirements, which are based on the failure consequence classification of the dam, regardless of the owner type or the use(s) of the water.

AGRI has initiated a number of projects to support agricultural producers and promote dam safety practices:

- AGRI and FLNR have partnered with the BC Cattlemen’s Association (BCCA) to estimate the number of active agricultural dams and to gather related information about dams. This includes a cost and benefit analysis study of agricultural dams and reservoirs in BC Under AGRI’s Climate Action Initiative (CAI), the BCCA has been a key partner in delivering a series of agricultural knowledge transfer workshops to support small dam owners on maintaining and enhancing dams in the Cariboo.*
- As part of AGRI’s Growing Forward 2 programming, the Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) / Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) Program provides cost-share funding to support technical feasibility studies, agricultural dam assessments and construction works related to erosion control of agricultural dams in riparian areas. This programming is expected to continue under the new Federal/Provincial/Territorial agriculture partnership which begins April 1, 2018.*
- AGRI has developed the Agriculture Water Demand Model (AWDM) for most BC regions to estimate the current and future water requirements for agriculture including irrigation and livestock watering based on current land use and climate conditions as well as projected climate change and potential changes in land use. The AWDM results serve as a foundation for determining water storage needs necessary to support growth in agriculture.*

.../3

AGRI looks forward to continuing to build strong working relationships with involved ministries, the agriculture sector and local governments with the aim of identifying water infrastructure needs for agriculture as well as promoting effective dam safety practices in BC. The Province recognizes that careful and detailed planning work and ongoing collaboration and discussion is necessary to protect and secure existing water storage facilities, and explore opportunities to increase water storage capacity for agriculture."

While we appreciate the information the Ministry of Agriculture has provided, we feel the point of our resolution has been missed.

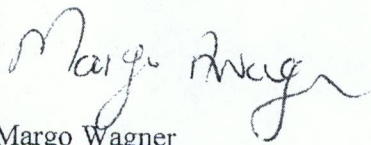
Agriculture is a key component of our regional community's economic sustainability. Reliable access to water to support agriculture is absolutely essential. Some of our agricultural producers rely on dams to provide that water.

However, their sustainability is being challenged by dam safety regulations and the financial burden of compliance. Further, the cost of compliance is directly related to factors that are not within the agriculture producers' control. Factors such as downstream development, species at risk and tourism/recreational interest can all lead to additional financial burden.

Our resolution calls for a sharing of the financial burden for the assurance of dam safety by all stakeholders in a dam, not just the farmer or rancher.

We look forward to receiving your Ministry's thoughts on this matter.

Yours truly,



Margo Wagner
Chair

c: The Honourable Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture
Donna Barnett, MLA, Cariboo-Chilcotin
Coralee Oakes, MLA, Cariboo-North