



Bullets

Our Reference # 296123

Department /Branch EPD/ Regional
Operations

Date: February 17, 2016

To: Mark Zacharias, ADM

Re: Meeting with MLA Kylo re: Spallumcheen/ Hullcar Aquifer, February 17, 2016

Latest sampling results;

- A sample from the aquifer was taken in late January and results have just come in. Nitrates are up slightly from last month's result of 13.3 mg/L to 13.9 mg/L.
- Interior Health has been provided with this information and our Impact Assessment Biologists are assessing the information.
- Interpreted results will be placed on the Ministry's website soon.

Next sampling;

- Samples are taken monthly since groundwater movement is very slow. Next sample is to be taken during the week of Feb 22.

Drinking Water Source;

- An alternate test well has been drilled, tapping into a different aquifer (Hullcar 102: a confined aquifer). This water has lower nitrate levels (2.55 mg/L). s.13

What is MOE doing about this?

- All agencies involved (MOE, AGRI, Health, FLNRO) have been meeting to discuss possible plans going forward. Ministry of Agriculture staff suggested a Group Environmental Farm Plan for farmers in the local area could be a strategic step to address potential agricultural pollution sources.

- Compliance staff attended the area to generally assess the land use and conduct compliance promotion for the Agricultural Waste Regulation. Staff confirmed that the area is heavily used for agriculture and multiple farms are utilizing manure on their fields that may not be in accordance with the regulation.
- The area is large and further compliance assessments will be conducted in the coming weeks.

Do provisions in the Water Sustainability Act have any influence on this issue?

- The WSA provides authority to establish water objectives to support a more consistent approach to considering water in natural resource decisions and local government planning. Water objectives can potentially help reduce impacts to help sustain water quantity, water quality and aquatic ecosystems.
- In addition, the Act provides for the development of water sustainability plans to protect watersheds and address conflicts between users, risks to water supply and quality and risks to aquatic ecosystem health.
- Both water objectives and water sustainability plans are longer-term tools requiring additional regulations and policy that will be developed after the WSA and groundwater regulation is brought into force early this year.

What is MoE doing to monitor for potential contamination of aquifers elsewhere in the Province?

- Since 1994, MOE has classified aquifers based on their level of use and vulnerability to contamination. This inventory of over 1,100 classified aquifers allows vulnerable aquifers to be identified and prioritized for management actions, such as monitoring.
- The MOE and FLNR monitor water quality in priority aquifers on an on-going basis. Monitoring has shown higher levels of nitrate in a few of the vulnerable aquifers that are heavily used (e.g., aquifers in Abbotsford, Osoyoos, and Grand Forks). Follow-up actions for these aquifers have included working with the responsible ministries to develop best practices guides for the various industry sectors, water suppliers and private well owners to help mitigate effects on aquifers.
- Monitoring is conducted for provincial observation wells and, in some locations, private water supply wells. Provincial observation well data are publicly available at <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/emswr/>. Results from private well monitoring are shared with the well owner and local health officials.
- Water supply systems throughout BC (systems that supply drinking water to the public) are required under the Drinking Water Protection Act to regularly monitor and report on their water quality.