



Reference: 41451

July 9, 2024

**VIA EMAIL: [prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca](mailto:prrd.dc@prrd.bc.ca)**

Brad Sperling, Chair  
Peace River Regional District  
PO Box 810, 1981 Alaska Avenue  
Dawson Creek, British Columbia  
V1G 4H8

Dear Brad Sperling:

Thank you for your letter of April 9, 2024, regarding the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship's (WLRS) support for the agriculture sector during time of drought and raising concerns about relevant permitting timeframes. I apologize for the delay in responding.

The Province has developed a Drought and Water Scarcity Response Plan: [British Columbia Drought and Water Scarcity Response Plan \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www.gov.bc.ca/drought-response-plan). For implementation, WLRS has partnered with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (AF) and the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness (EMCR) to enhance drought preparedness and response. Within the Northeast on March 21-22, 2024, "decoding drought" workshops were held for providing information to the agriculture sector about decision making during a drought event and how to be best prepared. The workshop videos are online at [2024 Drought and water management workshops - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www.gov.bc.ca/drought-workshops). We encourage the agricultural sector to work with AF to develop and implement plans for increasing drought resiliency and providing certainty to their operations.

A Northeast Regional Technical Drought Working Group is forming, to support development of drought management. This group will convene subject matter experts from provincial, federal, municipal and First Nations governments, to share technical expertise and traditional knowledge. One topic for discussion will be availability and access to water for agriculture purposes, including livestock grazing on crown land. In the meantime, WLRS is prioritizing *Water Sustainability Act* permit applications from the agricultural sector, to aid with drought mitigation measures. WLRS is also supporting permitting for alternate water supply for the agricultural sector in the Northeast Region.

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Brad Sperling, Peace River Regional District

WLRS recognizes the importance of early engagement and frequent dialogue on drought, to ensure agricultural producers and others in the region are best supported in making informed decisions regarding their water storage and use. To support farmers in building drought resilience, Budget 2024 earmarked \$83 million for infrastructure projects through the [Agricultural Water Infrastructure Program](#). This fund, in addition to the \$20-million provided to the program in 2023, will enable producers to improve their water security through development of irrigation and storage options.

Again, thank you for writing and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,



Nathan Cullen  
Minister

pc: Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Forests  
Honourable Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food  
Mike Bernier, MLA, South Peace  
Dan Davies, MLA, North Peace  
Bob Zimmer, MP, Prince George – Peace River – Northern Rockies



PEACE RIVER REGIONAL DISTRICT

April 9, 2024

File: 0400.20.11

The Honourable Nathan Cullen  
Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship  
PO Box 9012 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria, BC V8W 9L6

Via email: [WLRs.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:WLRs.minister@gov.bc.ca)

**RE: Availability and Access to Water for Agricultural Purposes and Permitting Timeframes**

Dear Minister Cullen,

At the March 21, 2024 Peace River Regional District Board Meeting, the Regional Board discussed concerns surrounding the extremely dry winter that has affected the Peace River Regional District and its impacts upon agriculture. After discussion, the Regional Board subsequently passed the following resolution:

MOVED, SECONDED and CARRIED

*“That the Regional Board send a letter to the Honourable Nathan Cullen, Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship; the Honourable Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food; and the Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Forests expressing concern about availability of and access to water for agricultural purposes such as cattle grazing on crown land in 2024; further, that the letter also express concerns over the timeframes involved to approve permits, and request that the Ministries involved consider shortening the length of the time to process the relevant permits.”*

Sincerely,

*Brad Sperling*

Brad Sperling  
Chair

c: The Honourable Bruce Ralston, Minister of Forests [FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:FOR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)  
The Honourable Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food [AGR.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AGR.Minister@gov.bc.ca)  
Mr. Mike Bernier, South Peace MLA, [Mike.Bernier.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Mike.Bernier.MLA@leg.bc.ca)  
Mr. Dan Davies, North Peace MLA, [Dan.Davies.MLA@leg.bc.ca](mailto:Dan.Davies.MLA@leg.bc.ca)  
Mr. Bob Zimmer, MP, [Bob.Zimmer@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Bob.Zimmer@parl.gc.ca)

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