



ALBERTA

ENVIRONMENT AND PROTECTED AREAS

Office of the Minister

Dear Water Licence Holder,

As you know, our province is currently in a drought. Unfortunately, we have received little precipitation so far this winter. These conditions mean there is potential for the drought to worsen this year, and we must be prepared.

Our province is taking action in accordance with Alberta's water shortage management plan. This plan ranges from Stage 1, which is a minor drought, to Stage 5, which can lead to a declaration of an emergency. We are currently in Stage 4.

Alberta has stood up a Drought Command Team, and a first draft of a 2024 Drought Emergency Plan has been completed and is being refined. We have also initiated drought modelling work that will help us predict and maximize the province's water supply.

The province is also bringing together an external advisory panel of leaders from various sectors to provide advice on drought preparations and to advise on how Alberta can make water more available over the long term.

Finally, and most importantly, starting February 1st, 2024, the Drought Command Team will be bringing together major water licence holders to negotiate water sharing agreements.

Water licence holders will be asked to voluntarily take less water in order to ensure that there is water available for as many users as possible. These negotiations will be the largest water-sharing effort that has ever been initiated in Alberta and the first since 2001.

In Alberta, there are 25,000 water licence holders that hold licences for 9.5 billion cubic metres of water. The Drought Command Team will select and prioritize negotiations with Alberta's largest water licence holders in an effort to secure significant and timely reductions in water use.

However, even if you are not identified as a major water licence holder, your support is still needed to help fully prepare Alberta for a severe drought. All Albertans will need to use less water to ensure that water is available to as many users as possible.

That is why I am writing to all water licence holders to ask that the following action be undertaken in the coming months:

1. Review and understand the conditions of your licence(s).
2. Review and understand how much water your business or organization uses and identify ways to reduce your use of water.
3. Take immediate action by investing in water conservation technologies that will help your business or organization reduce water use.
4. Develop drought plans now in case they are needed in the spring or summer.
5. Enter your licence onto Alberta's Digital Regulatory Assurance System (DRAS). DRAS is a secure online platform which will help licence holders compile and view all parts of their licence(s) for greater transparency, completeness, accuracy and timeliness when managing their water licences and water use.
6. Monitoring water availability in your area using rivers.alberta.ca and take action to reduce your water use if your area is under a water shortage advisory.

If you have any questions or require any additional information, please call us toll free at: 310-3773 (in Alberta), or email: epa.drought@gov.ab.ca.

Alberta has successfully navigated droughts before and has a long, proud history of coming together during tough times. I know we can count on you and all of Alberta's other water licence holders to take the actions necessary to get through these challenging times.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Schulz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being larger and more prominent than the last name.

Rebecca Schulz,
Minister of Environment and Protected Areas