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7 January 2014



Board of Directors
Regional District of North Okanagan
9848 Aberdeen Road
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Update for Local Governments on Water Conservation and Quality Improvement Grant process

Dear Chair Nichol and Board Directors

The purpose of the Okanagan Basin Water Board's WCQI grant program is to assist local organizations - local governments, public irrigation districts and non-profits - to address water issues and enhance the valley-wide sustainable use of water. The program was reviewed in 2013 to identify ways to improve delivery and the approval process.

The first step in the approval process is for the applicant to obtain a letter of support from a local government. These resolutions of support ensure that the project is consistent with water management objectives of local jurisdictions and give local governments a role in the screening process. It also allows elected officials to be better aware of projects undertaken in their community, and ensures that they have endorsed those applications coming from their own organization.

The review found that there was not a standard approach to providing resolutions of support in the valley, as some local governments gave blanket approval, while others "weeded through" the applications.

However, they are not intended to form part of the competitive process.

When providing a resolution of support for this program, the OBWB asks local government Councils and Boards to consider:

- *whether the application is consistent with water-related objectives in their jurisdiction;*
- *whether the applicant and suggested project reflect the values of the community; and*
- *other subjective criteria that would go into any council or board discussion;*

We ask that local governments not base their decision on perceived competition for available funding or other criteria (see below) that are reviewed by the OBWB at a later stage of the process.

During the grant selection process, the following criteria will be considered by the OBWB:

- Basin-wide benefit;



- Leveraging of funds;
- Focus on Action;
- Collaboration;
- Promotion of best practices;
- Complements current OBWB initiatives;
- Financial need;
- Track record/capacity;
- Innovativeness of project; and
- Quality of proposal.

It often helps if all applications are considered at a single meeting, to create a full picture of all proposed projects in the area. However, resolutions of support should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis on their merits, and not in relation to available funding. Should a local government have concerns or recommendations regarding a specific application, we ask that the questions be forwarded to OBWB staff for consideration before or during the grant award process.

The deadline for applications this year is February 21st, but the deadline for resolutions of support can be extended under special circumstances.

If you would like any more information about the WCQI grant program, please contact the Office and Project Manager, James Littlely at 250-469-6270 or james.littlely@obwb.ca.

Sincerely,

Anna Warwick Sears
Executive Director