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DATE: July 20, 2026
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Update on Response to Severe Greater Vernon Water Supply Challenges

The Regional District of North Okanagan (RDNO) continues to actively pursue solutions to address the severe water supply challenges facing the Greater Vernon Water (GVW) system.

On Thursday, July 16, Greater Vernon Advisory Committee (GVAC) Chair, Bob Fleming and Directors Victor Cumming, Ruth Hoyte, Amanda Shatzko and Tom Ouchi met with Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) Minister Randene Neill, along with senior staff from the Ministries of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship and Agriculture and Food, to discuss emergency measures that could help increase water availability for Greater Vernon residents and agricultural users

During the meeting, GVAC representatives presented two potential short-term emergency options for consideration:

- Accessing Swan Lake as a temporary emergency water source, with water transferred to the Goose Lake Reservoir system. Greater Vernon Water holds a water licence for BX Creek that could potentially be transferred to support water removal from Swan Lake if approved.
- Transferring water from non-reservoir lakes within the Aberdeen Plateau watershed into the existing reservoir lake system on a short-term emergency basis.

Minister Neill and ministry staff were receptive to the proposals and indicated they would review the options and provide a response as soon as possible.

While discussions with the Province continue, Greater Vernon Water is implementing all available measures within its authority to manage water supplies and support both domestic and agricultural users. These actions include:

- Implementing Stage 3 water restrictions and conservation measures.
- Coordinating water use scheduling among large-volume agricultural users to save operational water.
- Pursuing opportunities to introduce treated reclaimed water from the City of Vernon into agricultural water lines connected to the Goose Lake system.
- Utilizing the Antwerp Well to supplement areas of Lavington.
- Reducing domestic use on Kalamalka Lake allows areas normally supplied by Duteau Source to be served by Kalamalka Lake, conserving water at the Aberdeen Plateau.

The RDNO recognizes the significant impacts of the ongoing drought and limited water supplies on residents, farmers, and businesses throughout Greater Vernon. Staff and elected officials continue to work closely with provincial partners to identify immediate solutions while advancing longer-term infrastructure projects to improve water system resilience.

The RDNO would like to thank all sectors for stepping up to the challenge, as GVW is seeing the reductions required, demonstrating a strong community response to these challenging conditions. Residents are encouraged to continue conserving water and adhering to all water restrictions in effect. These conservation measures are helping to preserve available supplies while water resources remain limited. Continued collective efforts are essential to helping maintain water availability for domestic and agricultural needs throughout this period.