
INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship

Better water management practices coming to B.C.

VICTORIA – Water used by people, wildlife and communities in British Columbia will be protected against misuse by new regulations that promote compliance with water management best practices.

Government has implemented regulations that will allow financial penalties to be issued for violations of the Water Sustainability Act. The goal is to promote compliance with the legislation and to better manage water resources in B.C., while protecting critical habitat for vulnerable species.

Previously, small fines (as much as \$230) were available for minor violations or, for the most serious violations, court prosecution. The new fines for moderate to serious violations will give government more tools to encourage compliance with the act.

The regulations will allow for penalties of as much as \$100,000 for a general contravention, and as much as \$500,000 for high-penalty offences defined under the act. The exact amount of a fine will be determined by the comptroller of water rights following an investigation by compliance and enforcement staff.

The new administrative monetary penalties are modelled after similar fines used across the natural resource sector, including the Environmental Management Act, and the Forest and Range Practices Act. The goal is to promote compliance with the act that will benefit all British Columbians, with the new penalties giving government staff one more tool in a progressive system of enforcement.

This is one element of the Province's strengthened leadership on water, including:

- the creation of the Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship;
- co-development with First Nations of a new watershed security strategy and fund;
- new collaborative water governance agreements;
- agricultural water infrastructure programs;
- watershed and salmon restoration investments;
- community emergency preparedness funding; and
- increased collaborative engagement with local governments, First Nations, and community and business interests.

For more information about the order in council, visit:

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/oic/oic_cur/0006_2024

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