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New Funding Sources Announcements

WEST NILE VIRUS FUNDING ANNOUNCED

On June 25, 2004 the Ministry of Health Services announced \$1 Million in funding to assist local governments in mosquito control programs.

The funding is to be delivered to local government (regional districts, municipalities or groups of municipalities) through the Health Authorities. It will be distributed based on a guideline of assessed risk level as determined by the Health Authority:

- \$0.50 per capita for high-risk communities,
- \$0.05 per capita for non-high-risk communities.

However, the Health Authorities may do a risk assessment of the communities in their jurisdiction and distribute the funding where they think the resources will be most effective; in other words, the HAs are not obligated to distribute to local governments based on the per capita formula. The funding is provided on a cost sharing basis 1:1, up to the maximum budgeted to each local government by the health authority.

The funding is intended for the purposes of mosquito control. Eligible activities include larviciding, adulticiding, habitat modification and source reduction, equipment purchase and supplies, collaboration with other agencies, hiring of a contractor, etc. The Health Authorities are responsible for determining eligible activities and eligible budget costs.

Your Health Authority will be notifying local government in the region in the coming days. Members can contact the Health Authority for further information on this program.

DROUGHT MANAGEMENT PLANNING GRANTS

On May 31, 2004 the provincial government announced up to \$2 million in funding to local government as part of the Provincial Drought Action Plan. The funding, to be administered through Land and Water BC, is intended to assist communities with the preparation of water management plans such as water supply plans, water conservation plans and long-term drought management plans. The funding applications are now available on the Land and Water BC website, www.lwbc.bc.ca, follow the link to drought info.

Grant monies for this one time funding program are calculated on a \$0.75 per capita basis, with a \$8000 minimum up to \$50,000 maximum. Local governments and water improvement districts are eligible to apply.

Applications will be accepted from July 1 to December 31, 2004, or as long as funds remain, whichever comes first. All work must be completed by February 28, 2005 to receive full payment.

A conference was held to kick off the program on July 8 in Penticton, it was well attended by local government, agriculture and industry representatives. Land and Water BC is planning to host 6 regional workshops to support education on drought management planning, they are expected to take place in the months of July and August. Applicants for the grant monies are recommended to participate first in a drought management planning workshop and to review the Dealing with Drought handbook available on the website. (UBCM will work to notify members of the regional workshop dates as soon as they are known.)

Funding priority will go to water suppliers with systems

categorized as “stressed”. A stressed system is defined as one where:

- streamflows or storage levels are significantly lower than recorded average AND
- water quality does not meet water quality standards due to reduced streamflows or storage levels, and/or
- key habitat factors, such as temperature, quality, cover, substrate and accessibility, necessary to sustain a biologically diverse community are degraded, and/or
- typical seasonal demands cannot be met, and/or
- restrictions currently in place, and anticipation of increasing severity of restrictions, and/or
- water use conflicts exist (not defined).

Funding will also go to ‘proactive’ applicants, whose systems are not yet considered stressed. For instance, water suppliers in drought prone areas, or those facing rapid population growth who are looking to implement water conservation planning and programs.

Eligible program costs include participation in the drought management planning workshop, establishment of a Local Drought Management Team, development of contingency plans to deal with water shortage episodes, development of plans and bylaws around drought management and water conservation, water supply and demand analysis, and development and printing of educational materials. Costs that will not be covered include infrastructure, long term studies and monitoring, previously completed work or compliance/monitoring of bylaws, as well as projects currently eligible under the Infrastructure Planning Grant Program. The website also points applicants to funding for related projects available under the Emergency Planning Grants program, Local Government Grants Program and Federal/Provincial Agriculture Water Supply Expansion Program.

The handbook, *Dealing with Drought*, includes action steps, plan templates and model bylaws for water suppliers. View the handbook, grant application form, and sample completed application on the website, www.lwbc.bc.ca/drought info.

NEW GROUNDWATER REGULATIONS INTRODUCED

On July 7, 2004 Honourable Bill Barisoff, Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection, announced the introduction of the first phase of the Ground Water Protection Regulation.

This regulation is part of the Province’s Action Plan for Safe Drinking Water, which also includes:

- creation of one provincial and twelve regional drinking water officers,
- an integration of water protection measures across ministries,
- funding for the B.C. Centre for Disease Control to meet testing demands.
- provincial drought management plan.

The first phase regulation focuses on ensuring safe well construction, flood-proofing and capping to prevent run off flows into wells, and installation of well identification plates. The regulation includes a code of practice setting out minimum standards in relations to wells and well closure. The regulation also provides for qualification requirements and registration of well drillers and installers. The regulation will be phased in over the next 18 months. Future phases of the regulation will look at source protection measures, water analysis and well reports, and implementing water management plans in designated areas (2005/06 and beyond).

Immediate costs for well owners may be incurred for sealing and flood proofing of wells, capping and tagging the well, and well deactivation. Registration for well drillers and pump installers will begin November 1, 2004. More information can be found at http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/wat/gws/gws_reg_back/back.html.

UBCM members have supported the introduction of ground water protection measures in several resolutions at past UBCM Conventions (2001-B28; 2000-B22; 1998-B72; 1991-B15; 1989-B25).