



*Environment, Energy and Climate Action*  
**PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY FOR  
THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE  
WATER WITHDRAWAL REGULATIONS**



## **Water Act Regulations – Water Withdrawal**

### **Plain language summary for the proposed amendments**

#### **Introduction**

The Prince Edward Island *Water Act* Water Withdrawal Regulations are being implemented on June 16, 2021 as one of the four sets of regulations that operationalize the *Act*. The purpose of the Water Withdrawal Regulations is to control the extraction and use of water for the best benefit of Islanders while protecting the water required for healthy aquatic habitat and wildlife. The control must strike a balance on achieving these two goals while meeting the goals and objectives of the parent *Water Act*.

#### **What's Changed?**

Since the release of the second consultation draft of the Water Withdrawal Regulations, the Standing Committee on Natural Resources and the Environmental Sustainability have provided a [report to the legislature](#) and government with recommendations. This includes a recommendation for an irrigation strategy and that agricultural producers be treated the same as commercial or industrial users of water. The amendments being proposed enable these recommendations as well as address remaining recommendations.

#### **SECTION 1 - INTERPRETATION**

A definition of a drought contingency plan has been added to Section 1 to clarify that the purpose of a plan is to reduce the use of water when there are extreme drought conditions.

In the subsection addressing irrigation research, the reference to agricultural has been deleted to broaden the applicability of the potential for research on irrigation for other purposes and allow for research in areas where an irrigation strategy would be required.

#### **SECTION 2 – GROUNDWATER EXPLORATION PERMITS**

The restriction on drilling high capacity wells for agricultural irrigation has been removed to have the effect of treating agricultural irrigation the same as other uses of high capacity wells.

#### **SECTIONS 5, 6, and 8 – WATER WITHDRAWAL PERMIT**

References to a drought contingency plan has been changed to reflect the addition of the definition in Section 1.

The subsection prohibiting Water Withdrawal Permits for new agricultural irrigation wells has been changed to allow such permits if the irrigation is conducted in accordance with an irrigation strategy approved by the Minister.

The terms and conditions of a Water Withdrawal Permit have been changed to clarify that testing, monitoring and reporting may be required as part of the responsibilities of holding a permit.

References to the removed restriction in Section 2 have been dropped in sections relating to permit renewals and amendments. As high capacity wells could now be constructed for agricultural irrigation, the restriction on repurposing an existing well to agricultural irrigation has been removed.