LETTER OF THE DAY

Per capita water use falls

If trend continues, supply will be ample for years to come

For the first time since 2003, Metro Vancouver has enacted the third stage of water-use restrictions, banning all lawn-sprinkling and limiting other non-essential uses of drinking water. It's got many people wondering about the future of the water supply.

The region is expected to grow by a million more people in the next 20 years. Will we have enough water?

Over the past decade, Metro Vancouver has invested nearly $2 billion into improving drinking water quality, distribution and supply. Every day, Metro Vancouver supplies over a billion litres of high-quality drinking water to the residents and businesses of the region. During summer months, consumption can almost double, largely due to outdoor demands such as lawn-sprinkling. The good news is that this past decade, per capita water consumption has been falling. Maintaining this trend will allow us to ensure a sufficient drinking water supply for years to come, without having to invest even more in expensive new infrastructure.

Our long-range drinking water management plan takes into account population growth, climate change, ecological health and the ongoing prosperity of the region. Over the long term, we plan to invest more than $1.5 billion on projects to accommodate population growth, and our future supply strategy involves securing additional capacity from Coquitlam Lake as well as expanding storage capacity in the Seymour Watershed. We will continue to review our plans and policies in coming years as the impacts of climate change become more apparent.

Seasonal water use restrictions help ensure water is reserved for essential uses in homes and business and for firefighting, and in the last few weeks Metro Vancouver residents and businesses have cut their water consumption down to a level the reservoirs can sustain through the fall, even if we don't get significant rainfall.

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