

July 29, 2010

Mr. Brian Elliot  
Lesser Slave Watershed Council  
P.O. Box 2607  
High Prairie, AB T0G 1E0

Dear Mr. Elliott

Thank you for submitting the Lesser Slave Basin Water Management Plan - Phase 1 to Alberta Environment, and for your patience while we completed our review process. As you know, this included reviewing and gathering more information related to the minimum flow recommendation for the Lesser Slave River, and the various options to achieve this. Our department also determined that additional review time was necessary in order to receive comments on the plan from First Nations communities in the watershed.

Having completed our review, I am pleased to approve the Lesser Slave Basin Water Management Plan – Phase 1. Alberta Environment supports this planning document and recognizes its usefulness as a local planning and decision-making tool that can provide direction for the Watershed Council. Recommendations within the plan that are specific to Alberta Environment are supported in principle. However, implementation of these recommendations will be based on feasibility, availability of funds, departmental priorities, and additional discussions with the Lesser Slave Watershed Council. It is also important to note that recommendations stated within the plan that fall outside of Alberta Environment's mandate may also require additional discussions with the Ministry or agency responsible.

I would like to thank the Watershed Council for their efforts and commitment to developing a plan that has been well prepared through extensive background study and research. The plan provides a comprehensive perspective of the challenging issues facing the Lesser Slave River resulting from low flow conditions, and gives recommendations to deal with those issues.

Although this management plan includes recommendations that can generally be supported by Alberta Environment, there are specific components within the plan that require further comment. Alberta Environment's response to specific recommendations are given as follows:

**Recommendation:** *Maintain a minimum flow of six cubic metres per second in Lesser Slave River*

As part of this decision to approve, Alberta Environment supports the recommendation for a minimum flow rate of six cubic meters per second in the Lesser Slave River to meet existing

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