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## Improved Water Treatment in Greater Vernon Thanks to Federal and Provincial Funding

**(Vernon, British Columbia)** Residents in the Greater Vernon region will see improvements to their water system thanks to nearly \$14 million from the federal and provincial governments for the construction of a new treatment plant on Duteau Creek.

The announcement was made today by Colin Mayes, Member of Parliament for Okanagan – Shuswap, on behalf of the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities and the Honourable Rona Ambrose, Minister of Western Economic Diversification, together with Tom Christensen, Minister of Children and Family Development and MLA for Okanagan-Vernon. Mr. Mayes and Mr. Christensen were joined by Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) Third Vice-President Mayor Terry Lake and North Okanagan Regional District (NORD) Chair Jerry Oglow.

“Canada’s New Government is committed to the health of families and strong, prosperous communities through infrastructure projects that support a cleaner environment and a stronger, better country,” said Mr. Mayes. “Improvements to Vernon’s water treatment facility will benefit not only today’s residents, but also generations to come.”

The project will receive close to \$10.5 million through the federal Gas Tax Fund, and more than \$3.3 million through the Canada-British Columbia Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CBCMRIF). The North Okanagan Regional District is contributing \$6.1 million. The funds will pay for a new water treatment building and a water reservoir, including water clarification and chlorine disinfection systems. Under CBCMRIF, this project is conditionally approved pending the successful completion of an environmental assessment.

“Clean, safe drinking water is vital to the health of British Columbia communities and improving the quality of life of residents,” said Minister Christensen. “Residents in the Greater Vernon area will definitely benefit from this substantial investment to their water system, the result of partnerships between all levels of government.”

“This major infrastructure grant announcement will not only directly contribute to the long-term economic health of our Greater Vernon communities but will indirectly benefit the broader North Okanagan Region who tends to mirror the successes of our largest neighbour,” said Jerry Oglow, NORD Chair and Armstrong Mayor.

“One of the most basic services that local governments can provide is clean, accessible drinking water,” said **Third Vice-President Lake**. “UBCM applauds the partnership between Canada, BC and the NORD in undertaking this significant capital project.”

Canada’s New Government is providing \$635.6 million to British Columbia from 2005 to 2010 through the Gas Tax Agreement. As part of its \$33 billion “Building Canada” plan, the Government of Canada extended the Gas Tax Fund by an additional \$2 billion per year nationally, from 2010 to 2014. The Gas Tax Agreement is administered in British Columbia by the Union of BC Municipalities.

Under the initial CBCMRIF Agreement signed in June 2006, the federal and provincial governments each committed \$51 million to the fund, with participating local governments expected to make up the remaining costs. This year, Canada’s New Government and the Province of B.C. have each provided an additional \$23.5 million to the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund as part of their commitment to help smaller communities meet their pressing infrastructure needs. This additional funding brings the total federal and provincial investment and matching local government contribution in CBCMRIF projects to over \$220 million.

Please visit [www.infrastructure.gc.ca](http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca) or [www.civicnet.bc.ca](http://www.civicnet.bc.ca) for background information on the Canada – BC – UBCM Gas Tax Agreement.

Information on the Canada – BC Municipal Rural Infrastructure Program is available at [www.canadabcmrif.ca](http://www.canadabcmrif.ca)

For more information:

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