

DIRECTIVE

2014-01 4th Update

December 1, 2014



4th UPDATE - Short-Term Water Use Suspension Ends in Northeast B.C.

To: Industry

Effective Date: Immediately

LATEST REQUIREMENT:

Water withdrawals by the oil and gas industry are no longer suspended for most rivers, creeks, streams and lakes in northeast B.C. Suspensions had been in place since the summer for short-term water use approved by the BC Oil and Gas Commission (Commission).

The suspension is ENDED for all rivers and lakes in the following basins:

- Petitot River
- Hay River
- Kiwigana River
- Moberly River

The suspension is ENDED for water used for freezing-in winter access and ice bridges, to enable winter-season operations.

The suspension had been previously ended for the following basins:

- Peace River (except Moberly River)
- Sikanni Chief River
- Muskwa River
- Fontas River
- Prophet River

In addition, withdrawal of water from the following sources was never suspended in 2014:

- Fort Nelson River mainstem
- Liard River mainstem
- Water source dugouts

Note the following exceptions. The suspension **REMAINS IN PLACE** for:

- Rivers and lakes in the Liard River basin (except Liard River mainstem, as noted above)

NEW APPLICATIONS FOR WATER USE IN SUSPENDED AREAS

Given local variability, it is possible that some streams in the areas remaining under suspension will have recovered sufficiently to allow some water withdrawal. The Commission will review new applications for short-term water use, or requests to use existing approvals, on a site-specific basis.

Operators are requested to do the following to support their application or request to use an existing Section 8 approval:

1. Limit the application to water volumes and points of diversion that are realistic to the specific operational needs for the upcoming winter and spring.

2. For new applications for short-term use approvals for water from rivers and streams, or to request use of existing approvals, provide a good discharge measurement at the point(s) of diversion, to provide information on current flow conditions in relation to the volume of water requested.

The discharge measurement will be collected to an acceptable hydrometric standard by a qualified individual.

3. For new applications for short-term use approvals for water from lakes, or reactivation of existing approvals, provide information on lake bathymetry:
 - Surface area (hectares)
 - Depth (metres). If lake depth information is not already available (such as from provincial databases or previous surveys), obtain depth measurements at points along two transects representing the long and short lake axes, to determine maximum lake depth
 - Volume (cubic metres)
4. Basin Section 8 approvals for such things as geophysical exploration and other small and dispersed uses will not require field measurements.

BACKGROUND

The Commission closely monitors stream flow and water levels and makes changes to permitted uses as conditions change.

The Commission has reviewed all available hydrometric data from the Water Survey of Canada current to the date of this bulletin to assess flow conditions. Many gauged rivers have risen over the last month. The Petitot River at Hwy 77 is flowing at about 30 m³/s (2.5 million m³/day); the Kiwigana River was flowing at about 4.2 m³/s (363,000 m³/day) in early November and is expected to be at or near that flow currently; the Hay River in western Alberta was measured at 4.8 m³/s (415,000 m³/day) in late September, and is expected to be at or above that flow currently. Small streams in the Liard River basin are expected to be low, and frozen.

Earlier this year, the Commission suspended short-term water withdrawals by the oil and gas industry due to low stream flows in order to protect fish and aquatic resources and community water supplies. The Commission issued [Directive 2014-01](#) on July 28, suspending some short-term water withdrawals by the oil and gas industry in northeast B.C. due to drought conditions. On Aug. 8, the Commission issued an [Expanded Directive](#) to include additional basins within the Peace River watershed, and on Aug. 21, virtually all basins were affected in [Update 2](#). On October 28, [Update 3](#) ended the suspension in many areas.

Should you have any questions regarding this Directive Update, please contact:

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