



## AUDITOR GENERAL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **AGLG RELEASES WATER AUDIT ON THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN**

**SURREY** – A performance audit of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen’s management of its drinking water systems found that the Regional District had some good practices in place but would benefit from taking a more systematic and proactive approach in several key areas, Auditor General for Local Government (AGLG) Gordon Ruth said today.

“The Regional District was successful in meeting some of the audit’s core expectations and had infrastructure in place to ensure quality drinking water in two of the three systems we examined,” said Mr. Ruth. “By implementing the report’s recommendations and completing work that was already underway to address issues in the Faulder water system, the Regional District would help ensure successful drinking water management into the future.”

The audit reviewed three different drinking water systems operated by the Regional District (Faulder, Naramata and Olalla) as well as the Regional District’s overall governance and activities relating to drinking water provision.

The AGLG’s comprehensive report describes the complexity of managing drinking water delivery in British Columbia, focusing on how the Regional District operated the three audited systems during the period covered by the audit, from source to tap.

Mr. Ruth said, “We were pleased to find that the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen had a sound governance structure, collaborated with stakeholders and had numerous water conservation and demand management initiatives. The Regional District could build on these strengths by developing a more strategic and cohesive approach that brings together areas such as water source protection, demand management, emergency management and business continuity. It should ensure that its plans are up-to-date, relevant and include action plans that are fully implemented.”

The report’s 24 recommendations include eight relating to the Regional District’s governance and organization-wide activities relating to drinking water. Seven recommendations touch on the protection of water sources, while another three deal with water treatment and quality management. Four relate to drinking water storage and distribution and two cover communications and public awareness.

This is the AGLG's first report on the topic "*Local Government's Role in Ensuring Clean Drinking Water.*" A later second report will cover the City of Kelowna's drinking water management.

The Okanagan-Similkameen audit was relatively large and complex. Through looking at three different water systems and regional district-wide governance and practices, it explored three significant and distinct audit objectives, each requiring detailed examination by the performance audit team and a great deal of cooperation by the Regional District and its staff.

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen's performance audit report is available on the AGLG's website at [www.aglg.ca](http://www.aglg.ca).

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