



## AUDITOR GENERAL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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### NEWS RELEASE

April 12, 2018

#### **AGLG RELEASES DRINKING WATER AUDIT ON THE CITY OF KELOWNA**

**SURREY** – A performance audit of the City of Kelowna’s management of its drinking water system found that the City had a strategic focus on the provision of clean drinking water for all residents of Kelowna and met most of the expectations set out in the audit objectives, Auditor General for Local Government (AGLG) Gordon Ruth said today.

“Water is essential to all of us and because of its importance, the effective and reliable delivery of clean and safe drinking water today and over the long term is of concern to everyone,” said Mr. Ruth. “I was pleased to see that the City of Kelowna had in place most of the governance, activities, infrastructure, staff and programs it needed to ensure quality drinking water. These included several effective management practices that contributed to its water utility functioning well in most areas.”

The audit focused on how well Kelowna managed its drinking water-related governance structure and activities, as well as the drinking water supply used by the City’s water utility and its treatment and distribution of drinking water. The City provides drinking water to slightly more than half of its almost 130,000 residents, with the remainder provided by other public and private suppliers.

The audit did not set out to express an opinion on the City’s efforts to amalgamate Kelowna’s five largest drinking water systems, although it does provide some recommendations relating to the City’s governance and management of these initiatives.

Mr. Ruth said, “By strengthening areas such as source water protection, increased attention to demand management strategies, drought management, stakeholder engagement and expansion of its preventative maintenance program, Kelowna would help ensure successful drinking water management into the future. We also make recommendations to improve on the City’s business continuity planning and to ensure that its emergency response plan for its water system is updated and tested regularly.”

The AGLG’s comprehensive report describes the complexity of managing drinking water delivery in British Columbia, focusing on how the City operated its own system during the period covered by the audit, from source to tap. A performance audit represents a snapshot in time, which is particularly relevant in Kelowna, where broader, city-wide discussions and decisions about drinking water integration and/or amalgamation are ongoing.

The report's 15 recommendations include ten relating to the City's governance and organization-wide activities relating to drinking water. Three recommendations focus on protecting the City's water source as well as conservation and demand management, while two deal with water treatment and quality management.

This is the AGLG's second report on the topic "*Local Government's Role in Ensuring Clean Drinking Water.*" The office released a report in May 2017 on the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen's drinking water management.

The Kelowna audit was relatively large and complex, as 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 City and its staff. All of this took place during a period when Kelowna was exploring its future options for drinking water delivery.

The City of Kelowna's performance audit report is available on the AGLG's website at [www.aglg.ca](http://www.aglg.ca).

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