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June 16, 2023

Dear Irrigator,

This update is being provided in response to the drought conditions being experienced across Southern Alberta. River flows are low due to a below-average snowpack and the rapid melting of the snow due to hot weather in May, and irrigation demand is high due to lack of rain.

The BRID's water supply/storage situation is good, and as a result, we do not believe there is a need to reduce the on-farm water use limit from the current 20-inch allocation, even though neighboring districts have reduced theirs. Reasons for this decision include the following:

- The current useable live storage in the headworks reservoirs (McGregor, Travers, and Little Bow) is approximately 359,000 acre feet, which is average for mid-June.
- In recent extremely dry years, such as 2017, the actual on-farm water use across the district has averaged less than 16 inches per acre.
- Water use to date this year has averaged about 4 inches per acre.
- Based on what we believe to be a worst-case scenario for diversion from the Bow River for the remainder of the year, assuming irrigators use another 12 inches of water per acre on average, and assuming average return flow, we would expect to have 160,000 acre feet of useable storage at year-end, which is 50% of normal winter storage.
- The reservoirs are there to be used, and we should expect to use them in a year like this one.
- Farmers have made their cropping and input decisions based on a normal water supply, and we are able to deliver that this year.

Although we do not believe we need to or should reduce the water use limit this year, please consider the following points:

- Reducing return flow is one way we can ensure there is more water left for next year. We usually spill over 45,000 acre feet in a dry year, and we can save much of this if you will cooperate with your ditchrider by always ordering water on and off every time you irrigate. Not ordering water off results in it being wasted as spill.
- Any wasteful irrigation practices will reduce the available water next year. Please irrigate responsibly.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact your board member or the general manager.

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors of the Bow River Irrigation District