



STAFF REPORT

Title: AEP Letter - Inter-Basin Transfers

Meeting Date: August 13, 2019

Executive Summary:

There has been a perceived lack of clarity surrounding the Government of Alberta's stance on allowing inter-basin transfers, as well as the application of the policies and procedures required to approve the transfer of water from one basin to another for use as drinking water.

A request was made through the Water North Coalition to follow up on previous attempts by RUSC to find answers on the government's position. The initial request was for a joint letter from the City of Cold Lake and the Water North Coalition (WNC) to ask for clarification from the Ministry of Environment and Parks in regards to the government's stance on inter-basin transfers for use as drinking water, however, it seems that the coalition has a lengthy process for approval and may ultimately have some concerns with the request. Water North Coalition is supported by Government of Alberta staff members. A draft letter has been attached for council's consideration.

Background:

The Cold Lake Regional Utility Services Commission (RUSC) wrote to the Ministry of Environment and Parks in November of 2018, describing a lack of clarity surrounding the Government's stance on and procedures for approving a transfer of water from one basin to another for use as drinking water.

RUSC described a situation in which conflicting messages have been sent from different government departments, creating the perception that policies are not being applied evenly across regions, and that the process that could be open to influence of political expediency, rather than being governed by clear and predictable policy.

Attempts by RUSC and WNC to gain a clear picture of the government's position, policy and procedures relating to this matter have been unsuccessful despite past letters, meetings with government officials, and a presentation from AEP on inter-basin transfers.



Alternatives:

- Council may pass a motion authorizing a letter from the City of Cold Lake and/or RUSC to the Minister of Environment and Parks, requesting clarity on the government's stance and procedures regarding inter-basin transfers.
- Council may pass a motion authorizing a joint letter with the Water North Coalition to the Minister of Environment and Parks, requesting clarity on the government's stance and procedures regarding inter-basin transfers.
- Council may respectfully decline to authorize a joint letter with the Water North Coalition at this time.

Recommended Action:

Administration recommends that Council pass a motion authorizing a letter from the City of Cold Lake and/or RUSC to the Minister of Environment and Parks, requesting clarity on the government's stance and procedures regarding inter-basin transfers.

Budget Implications (Yes or No):

No

Submitted by:

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