

NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNMENT NOT EFFECTIVELY ENSURING GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY

VICTORIA – The provincial government is not effectively ensuring the sustainability of British Columbia’s groundwater resources, says Auditor General John Doyle in his latest report. These groundwater resources are critical to satisfying drinking water, agricultural and industrial needs.

“One million British Columbians are estimated to rely on groundwater for daily use, and this demand is increasing,” said Doyle. “The government must put in place an appropriate framework to manage this precious resource sustainably.”

The audit examined the existing information, protection measures and access controls in place to ensure groundwater sustainability. It looked at government’s overall management of groundwater resources, with a focus on the work of the former Water Stewardship Division in the Ministry of Environment.

Overall, the audit concluded that the ministry lacks the information it needs to manage groundwater, and that protection and control over access to groundwater are inadequate. The report contains seven recommendations for addressing groundwater sustainability.

“While there is much to be done, I am encouraged that government has recognized groundwater’s vulnerability and made its protection a priority through modernization of the *Water Act*,” said Doyle. “I look forward to receiving updates on the ministry’s plans and actions to address these issues and the recommendations in my report.”

The Auditor General is a non-partisan, independent Officer of the Legislature who reports directly to the Legislative Assembly. The *Auditor General Act* empowers the Auditor General to conduct audits, report findings and make recommendations.

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2010/11 Report #8 – *An Audit of the Management of Groundwater Resources in British Columbia*

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