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# Review of tainted north Okanagan aquifer includes proposals to protect water



THE CANADIAN PRESS

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VICTORIA — The British Columbia government says it is already moving ahead with recommendations from an independent review aimed at improving water quality in a north Okanagan valley.

A review of the Hullcar Valley aquifer near Spallumcheen was ordered over the summer and its final report makes nine sets of recommendations to improve the balance of nitrates in the soil and restore the aquifer to acceptable nitrate levels.

Environment Minister George Heyman says in a news release that the New Democrat government wants to ensure agricultural practices don't interfere with the provision and protection of clean, safe drinking water.

Among the report's recommendations is a call for independently verified monitoring and reporting of aquifer and soil nutrient status.

About 250 area residents have been under a water advisory for years after local officials reported in March 2014 that nitrate levels in the Hullcar Valley aquifer exceeded Health Canada guidelines for drinking water quality.

A 2016 report from B.C.'s privacy commissioner found that liquid manure applied to fields as a source of nitrate fertilizer for crops was a source of groundwater pollution.

The privacy commissioner stepped in after a complaint from the Environmental Law Centre in Victoria urged the government to disclose soil test results from the aquifer.

Brian Upper, a spokesman for the Steele Springs Waterworks District, a small water system within the Township of Spallumcheen that draws water from the Hullcar aquifer, says the district is interested in responding to the report and suggesting amendments to regulations.

"We are hopeful that this process will lead the government to help remediate the nitrate-contaminated aquifer and to finally proactively

## TORONTO WEATHER

10°C

Partly cloudy  
Feels like 6 °C

Wednesday 2 °C

Thursday 1 °C

Friday 0 °C

Saturday -1 °C

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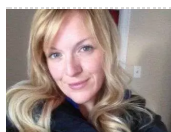
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