

Grants could quickly evaporate unless water saved – UVic study

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Water

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introducing new building code standards that require water-conserving utilities.

Switching to water friendly appliances in a house occupied by one family of four can save 80,000 litres of water a year.

"When you multiply that by the number of families in the CRD, the savings are substantial," said Jensen, adding the issue has become increasingly immediate with another long, hot summer anticipated this year.

"Everywhere you go in the province they're predicting a drought. It should be attacked locally, but I'd urge the provincial government to attack it as well."

The Facts

Canadians are among the highest urban water users in the world, with the average person using 343 litres per capita per day at home. That's 2.5 times higher than the European average.

Flushing the toilet accounts for nearly 27 per cent of water consumption in most households, followed by washing clothes (22 per cent) and showering (17 per cent).

A whopping 14 per cent of water is lost to leaks.

Conscientious CRD welcomes overall, responsible approach

Jennifer McLarty
Weekend Edition

Canadian cities should be left high and dry of infrastructure grants until they commit to conserving water, according to a University of Victoria research group.

The POLIS Project on Ecological Governance makes the recommendation in its latest report titled *The Future in Every Drop: The Benefits, Barriers and Practice of Urban Water Demand Management in Canada*.

"Government must lead by example, demonstrate the importance of water conservation and the potential for innovative solutions, and help create a lasting water ethic in its citizens," said Michael M'Gonigle, a UVic environmental law professor and project director for POLIS.



Nils Jensen

While some jurisdictions might object to the idea, it gets no criticism from the Capital Regional District, which already spends millions every year on conserving water.

It offers everything from irrigation seminars and rebates for water-friendly appliances, to conservation course kits aimed at Grade 2 students.

"We see that as a way for us to avoid having to develop a new and expensive water source," said Nils Jensen, chair of the Regional Water Supply Commission.

The CRD's goal is to reduce consumption by 20 per cent, which would keep the Sooke Lake Reservoir viable until 2030.

If that target can't be met, the region will have to look at pouring \$150 million into developing the Leech River watershed and constructing a filtration plant.

"I like the idea of linking infrastructure dollars to water conservation where they're targeted at supply and quantity," said Jensen.

But he adds he's not crazy about the idea when it comes down to people's health.

"If we're talking about protecting water quality that's a difference issue. There should be no connection in securing funding."

Jensen also believes higher levels of government could be doing more to promote water conservation by

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