



# Media Release

**Date:** April 7, 2021

For immediate release

## **RDCK Seeks Public Approval for Erickson Water Metering & Distribution Upgrades Through Alternative Approval Process**

Nelson, BC: The Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is proposing universal water metering and distribution upgrades for the Erickson water service to be funded by \$3.7 million in long-term borrowing. Approval of the electors within the service area to adopt the Erickson Water Service Loan Authorization Bylaw is being obtained by means of Alternative Approval Process (AAP).

“Universal metering reduces water wastage, greatly improves leak detection and provides an opportunity for improved rate equity for our customers. A reliable water supply is vital to our customers and agriculture, which is the basis for industry and tourism in the area.” said Uli Wolf, General Manager of Environmental Services.

The Erickson water distribution system and Arrow Creek water treatment plant are facing a number of challenges. The treatment plant is routinely operated at emergency capacity for long periods of time during warm weather. Leakage remediation resulting from the recent Arrow main line replacement project has been displaced by increased water consumption and potentially other distribution system leakage or customer side leakage. The Erickson water system is facing increased development pressure and growth in the tree fruit sector, which has resulted in the requirement to impose a moratorium on the issuance of new irrigation privileges.

Costly capacity upgrades are possible, but Arrow Creek, which supplies water to the Arrow treatment plant, is susceptible to droughts, and creek base flows need to be maintained for fish and other aquatic species.

Both the Erickson water service and Arrow water service have seen significant cost increases in recent years. The Arrow water service is cost shared based on water consumption between the Erickson water service and the Town of Creston. In recent years, the Arrow cost share to Erickson has been increasing more than the cost share to the Town due to an overall trend in increased consumption in Erickson.

Water conservation measures are required during warm, dry weather but have not been applied to agriculture in the past due to the potential for economic loss and damage to crops, fruit trees and berry bushes, but might need to be introduced in the future, if water demands keep increasing.

The Erickson distribution system has a number of aging steel and asbestos cement water lines in need of replacement in the near future. The proposed borrowing will also fund two water line replacement projects.

As part of the AAP process, eligible electors within the service area who are opposed to the proposed new Loan Authorization Bylaw may petition against the Bylaw adoption by signing an Elector Response Form. If at least 10% of the electors petition against the proposed Bylaw prior to the deadline, public approval has not been gained and the RDCK may not proceed with the Bylaw. The RDCK may then elect to seek public approval by Assent Voting (Referendum).

The deadline for submitting Elector Response Forms is 4:30 p.m. on May 10, 2021. An online public meeting will be held on April 21, 2021. We encourage you to attend the online public meeting and review information as it becomes available before making your decision. Please visit our website at [www.rdck.ca/AAPericksonWaterSystem](http://www.rdck.ca/AAPericksonWaterSystem) for more information on the meeting, the projects, proposed borrowing, the Alternative Approval Process, and Elector Response Forms.

*Incorporated in 1965, the Regional District of Central Kootenay (RDCK) is a local government that serves 60,000 residents in 11 electoral areas and nine member municipalities. The RDCK provides more than 160 services, including community facilities, fire protection and emergency services, grants, planning and land use, regional parks, resource recovery and handling, transit, water services and much more. For more information about the RDCK, visit [www.rdck.ca](http://www.rdck.ca).*

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