



February 1, 2024

Hon. Gary Crossman
Minister, Environment and Climate Change
Marysville Place, P.O. Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1

Re: Comments on A Water Strategy for New Brunswick Progress Report and Five-Year Review – January 2024

Dear Minister Crossman:

In January 2024, your department quietly released a report titled “A Water Strategy for New Brunswick Progress Report and Five-Year Review – January 2024.” On behalf of the Conservation Council of New Brunswick (CCNB), I am writing to congratulate your department on publishing the report. However, I regretfully must also express my disappointment with the government's review and update of “A Water Strategy for New Brunswick 2018 – 2028.” In addition, the Progress Report and Five-Year Review show a lack of movement on many of the action items within the Water Strategy.

The Water Strategy was developed through a collaborative process involving various government departments, Indigenous communities, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders. The expectation from the organizations involved, indeed the commitment by your department (see Goal 4) in the development of the Water Strategy, was to continue working together to achieve the goals of the strategy. However, your department's decision to conduct an internal review of the Water Strategy without involving any other organizations goes against the original collaborative spirit of the Water Strategy.

It is especially concerning that senior members of your department did not mention they were conducting this review at a recent (October 17, 2023) meeting they held with members of the Watershed Caucus of the New Brunswick Environmental Network (NBEN). This meeting, where department staff members shared several initiatives they were working on and also expressed the department's wish for open communication, would have been the perfect opportunity to mention their work on the Progress Report and Five-Year Review. Rather, department staff chose to omit this information. This type of behaviour undermines trust and is highly detrimental to building productive working relationships.

Please find my attached comments on the Progress Report and Five-Year Review. I hope

that your department will recommit to working collaboratively with Indigenous communities and stakeholders so that together, we can achieve our collective vision for the protection and management of New Brunswick's water to ensure its quality and availability for future generations.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss this or any other issue related to the health of New Brunswick's valuable ecosystems.

Sincerely,



Bev Gingras
Executive Director
Conservation Council of New Brunswick

Enclosure: CCNB Comments on Water Strategy Progress Report and Review February 2024

CC: Charbel Awad, Deputy Minister, Environment and Climate Change
Christie Ward, Assistant Deputy Minister, Authorizations and Compliance
Katie Pettie, Assistant Deputy Minister, Environmental Science and Protection
Melanie Laird, Director, Strategic Initiatives
Paul Jordan, Director, Provincial and Community Planning