

## Chapter 49

# Water Security Agency – Risks to Water Supply

### 1.0 MAIN POINTS

At August 2016, the Water Security Agency had implemented the two remaining recommendations that we first made in our 2010 audit of the Agency's processes to identify risks to the water supply.

The Agency publicly communicated, in the *2015 State of the Environment Report*, causes of risks to the water supply and the likelihood and impact of those risks.

### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The Agency supports the protection of drinking water; flood and drought response, and management of water supplies, water quality, and aquatic habitat. The Agency also owns and operates provincial dams and water supply channels.

Our *2010 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 19 concluded that the Agency's processes to identify risks to the water supply were not adequate. We made six recommendations. As reported in our *2013 Report – Volume 2*, Chapter 49, by September 30, 2013,<sup>1</sup> the Agency had implemented four of the six recommendations.

To conduct this review engagement, we followed the standards for assurance engagements published in the *CPA Canada Handbook – Assurance*. To evaluate the Agency's progress towards meeting our recommendations, we used the relevant criteria from the original audit. The Agency's management agreed with the criteria in the original audit. To carry out this engagement, we discussed the actions taken by the Agency to implement our recommendations with management, and reviewed related documentation (e.g., *2015 State of the Environment Report*).

### 3.0 STATUS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out each recommendation including the date on which the Standing Committee on Public Accounts agreed to the recommendation, the status of the recommendations at August 31, 2016, and the Agency's actions up to that date.

<sup>1</sup> September 2013 was the time of our last follow-up.



### 3.1 Risks to the Water Supply Identified and Communicated to the Public

We recommended that the Water Security Agency (formerly Saskatchewan Watershed Authority) consistently document identified causes of risks to the water supply. (2010 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 20, 2011)

**Status** – Implemented

We recommended that the Water Security Agency (formerly Saskatchewan Watershed Authority) communicate to the public risks to the water supply including likelihood and impact of these risks. (2010 Report – Volume 2; Public Accounts Committee agreement January 20, 2011)

**Status** – Implemented

The Agency previously informed the public about the state of Saskatchewan watersheds through its *2010 State of the Watershed Report* (Watershed Report).<sup>2</sup> The Watershed Report provided trends on the health of watersheds and the stressors that negatively impacted them.

Instead of preparing a periodic Watershed Report, the Agency contributed information on water supply to the Ministry of Environment for inclusion in the *2015 State of the Environment Report* (Environment Report).<sup>3</sup>

The Environment Report discusses the risks to the water supply. It outlines causes of these risks and comments on their likelihood and impact. It provides various maps displaying this information for each watershed.

In addition, it describes risks to the water supply in three main categories: water quality, water quantity, and water consumption and conservation. For example, it discusses that causes of risks to the quantity of surface water include amount of precipitation, amount of water used by humans (e.g., irrigation), etc.

The Environment Report describes that the impact of water shortages can result in deterioration in water quality and negative effects to aquatic habitat. The likelihood of low surface water quantity occurring is described for each watershed.

Also, the Agency's *25 Year Saskatchewan Water Security Plan* includes some information on causes of risks to the water supply.<sup>4</sup> For example, it discusses how changes such as population growth, economic growth, and climate change create risks to the water supply.

<sup>2</sup> [www.wsask.ca/About-WSA/Publications/State-of-the-Watershed-Report---2010/](http://www.wsask.ca/About-WSA/Publications/State-of-the-Watershed-Report---2010/) (21 September 2016).

<sup>3</sup> *2015 State of the Environment Report*, p. 72-74. <http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/66/82781-English.pdf> (21 September 2016).

<sup>4</sup> The Plan outlines 7 goals and 89 actions to help ensure the sustainability and quality of Saskatchewan's surface and groundwater supplies. Annually, the Agency's annual report (e.g., *Water Security Agency Annual Report for 2015-16*) includes its progress towards implementing the goals and actions set in the Plan.