

BILL

No. 615

An Act respecting Comprehensive Wetland Conservation Policy

(Assented to _____)

WHEREAS Saskatchewan requires policy to conserve, retain, and restore the province's wetlands, for the benefit of all Saskatchewan people, both current and future generations; and

WHEREAS wetlands contribute to source water protection and ecological functioning, including groundwater recharge, shoreline protection, carbon sequestration, an oxygen and nutrient source, flood control, soil conservation, and providing habitat for aquatic species, wildlife, waterfowl and migratory birds; and

WHEREAS wetlands contribute to many important socio-economic functions, including hunting, trapping, fishing, foraging, agriculture, tourism, recreation, and natural heritage and culture; and

WHEREAS the development of policy respecting the conservation and stewardship of Saskatchewan's waters will contribute to healthy citizens, vibrant communities, sustainable economies, and cultural traditions.

NOW THEREFORE HIS MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows:

Short title

1 *The Comprehensive Wetland Conservation Policy Act.*

Interpretation

2 In this Act:

“**best practice**” means a procedure that has been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption;

“**conservation**” means the preservation and protection of animals, plants, and their habitats;

“**public consultation**” means a procedurally fair process undertaken in good faith and following best practice with the intention of substantially identifying, engaging, and addressing the concerns of stakeholders and knowledge experts;

“**stewardship**” means the responsible use and protection of the environment.

Policy framework

3(1) The Government of Saskatchewan shall establish an evidenced based, scientifically defensible, and enduring policy which creates an overarching and

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cohesive policy and management framework for wetland stewardship and conservation.

(2) A collaborative and inclusive approach that considers the full range of ecological functions and socio-economic uses that wetlands provide shall be used to develop the policy.

(3) The policy shall respect the inherent rights of First Nation and Métis rights holders, Indigenous traditional knowledge, perspectives, and land uses.

(4) The policy shall account for regional differences within the province.

(5) The policy shall develop scientifically defensible and evidenced-based protocols for annual monitoring and reporting of wetlands throughout Saskatchewan.

Meaningful Consultation

4(1) In developing the policy, the Government shall undertake meaningful consultation in conformance with best practice.

(2) In order to ensure consideration of a broad range of stakeholder positions, the Government shall engage with the following stakeholders, including but not limited to:

- (a) water rights and permit holders;
- (b) interjurisdictional and transboundary governments;
- (c) recreational and traditional users and their representatives;
- (d) agricultural producers;
- (e) commercial operators,
- (f) tourism operators;
- (g) industry operators;
- (h) water experts; and
- (i) water conservation and stewardship organizations.

(3) The policy consultation shall provide full transparency on stakeholder feedback.

(4) The policy consultation shall demonstrate a cost-benefit analysis which examines the potential impacts on, including but not limited to:

- (a) impacted stakeholders;
- (b) rights holders;
- (c) physical infrastructure, such as roadways, ditches, culverts, and other structures;

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- (d) water treatment systems;
- (e) downstream watersheds;
- (f) groundwater sources; and
- (g) interjurisdictional agreements.

(5) The policy consultation shall consider climate change projections and address those scenarios.

Coming into force

3 This Act comes into force on Assent.

FOURTH SESSION

Twenty-ninth Legislature

SASKATCHEWAN

BILL

No. 614

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Received and read the

First time

Second time

Third time

And Passed

Ms. Erika Ritchie

Printed under the authority of
The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
of Saskatchewan
2023