

July 18, 2007

for
immediate
release

Increasing Water Pollution Must be Addressed, Say Alberta Liberals

Edmonton – Alberta Liberal Shadow Environment Minister David Swann is raising concerns about increasing water pollution in light of a recent report that indicated that only two out of six river systems in the province had good water quality.

In the government report *Measuring Up*, two out of six river systems had “good” to “excellent” water quality, which means that four river systems are in the fair to poor condition. This data is in contrast to previous years, when five out of six river systems had good to excellent water quality.

“The fact that four major river systems that provide drinking water to Albertans are in decline is extremely concerning,” says Swann. “This data has serious implications for Albertans and shows that Alberta Environment is not fulfilling their duty to protect our water, including wetlands.”

The measuring criteria is the River Water Quality Index that evaluates the water quality of six major Alberta rivers at key sites, based on monthly data on four groups of variables – metals, bacteria, nutrients and pesticides.

Swann says the government needs to re-visit the Water for Life Strategy, as the plan is in its fourth year and Alberta’s water resources are at risk.

“The government has asked Albertans to comment on Water for Life this summer,” says Swann. “I hope the message they’ll get is it’s not working. Clearly this government doesn’t have the adequate science, monitoring and enforcement.”

The *Measuring Up* report echoes concerns from the Rosenberg Forum of international experts which evaluated Alberta’s water management in 2006 and found serious deficiencies.

“The Environment Department is seriously underfunded and incapable of properly protecting this vital resource. Water should be a top priority,” says Swann. “What could be more important to our economic, social and environmental future than our province’s water resources?”

-30-

The section of the report can be accessed at:

<http://www.finance.gov.ab.ca/publications/measuring/measup07/goal.html#goal11>

For more information contact:

Yolande Cole
Media Liaison
780-446-6868

or

David Swann
Shadow Environment Minister
403-614-3208