



Reference: 50728

July 21, 2026

VIA EMAIL: wendyrholm@gmail.com

Wendy Holm, Chair
Fanny Bay Groundwater Collective

Dear Wendy Holm:

Thank you for your letter of June 10, 2026, regarding your request to pause the review of existing use groundwater licence applications for Natural Glacier Waters and Cermaq. I am pleased to respond.

I appreciate you taking the time to share your concerns about groundwater sustainability in your community, including the pressures on local aquifers and the importance of ensuring water use is managed responsibly for current and future needs.

Please be assured that all information received by the Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship (WLRS), including correspondence such as your letter, is retained on file and considered as part of the decision-making process for water licence applications.

Existing non-domestic groundwater users are subject to specific transition provisions, as indicated in the *Water Sustainability Act* (WSA) [Section 140](#) and Water Sustainability Regulation (WSR) [Section 55](#). These provisions apply to groundwater use occurring prior to February 29, 2016, when the WSA came into effect.

The WSA enables eligible existing non-domestic groundwater users who were diverting and using groundwater prior to February 29, 2016, to continue to divert and use groundwater in the same manner and for the same purpose, provided that they submitted an application for a licence by the March 1, 2022, deadline. This continuation of use is authorized until a decision is made on their application.

The Province is actively working to complete all submitted existing use groundwater applications. Advancing decisions on these applications is a critical step in transitioning groundwater use into the regulatory framework established by the WSA.

Processing these applications allows the Province to better manage groundwater resources across British Columbia. Through the licensing process, decision-makers gain important information about groundwater diversion and use, including the volume, purpose, timing, and the date of first use. This information supports improved oversight, future water allocation decisions, and long-term sustainability of aquifers. Information gathered during the technical assessment allows decision-makers to tailor conditions on licenses, helping protect and mitigate impacts to the aquifers where deemed necessary.

It is important for the Province to complete the file review and decisions of transitioning users, prior to exploring other more complex regulatory options such as a Water Sustainability Plan. Therefore, the Province will continue to make decisions on existing use groundwater applications to support the effective management and protection of water resources. WLRS intends to complete all decisions on these files across the province by June 2027. For further questions, please contact Jen Andrews at Jennifer.L.Andrews@gov.bc.ca or 250 420-6353.

Again, thank you for writing and sharing your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randene Neill', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Randene Neill
Minister

pc: The Honourable Josie Osbourne, MLA, Mid Island – Pacific Rim

Jen Andrews, Resource Manager, Water Authorizations Branch, Ministry of
Water, Land and Resource Stewardship