

**REPORT TO SURFSIDE PARK ESTATES WATER SERVICE COMMITTEE
MEETING OF THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025**

SUBJECT **Arsenic Health Guidelines**

ISSUE SUMMARY

Health Canada proposes to lower the maximum acceptable concentration (MAC) for arsenic in drinking water from 10 µg/L to 5 µg/L. This will have operational and financial implications for Capital Regional District's (CRD) Surfside Water System on Mayne Island.

BACKGROUND

The CRD Surfside Water Service on Mayne Island uses source water from a groundwater well that exhibits naturally high arsenic concentrations. The existing water treatment plant was originally designed to reduce arsenic concentrations to meet the current Health Canada guidelines with a MAC of 10 µg/L. Now Health Canada proposes to lower the MAC to 5 µg/L. This proposal is currently in the consultation stage and CRD staff engaged in the water quality committee of the Canadian Water & Wastewater Association, had the opportunity to provide Health Canada with concerns and comments around operational and financial implications. It is however expected that Health Canada's proposal will eventually be accepted, and by approximately early 2026 this new MAC will be applied to all drinking water systems in Canada.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the strategic goals of the CRD's Corporate Plan, the CRD is committed to provide high quality and safe drinking water to its communities. To consistently meet the proposed new MAC, the Surfside Water Service would have to increase operational and water quality monitoring expenditures or replace the existing arsenic treatment system with one that was specifically designed to meet the new MAC long-term. Both options will have financial implications to the utility and its customers.

CONCLUSION

It is anticipated that Health Canada will lower the maximum acceptable concentration for arsenic in drinking water from 10 µg/L to 5 µg/L. The Surfside Water Service on Mayne Island will face additional operating expenditures when this regulatory change is implemented. The CRD will work with the Committee to prepare for this scenario by including the anticipated additional operational costs and in addition prepare an arsenic water treatment process options and alternatives review in the five-year capital plan in the 2026 budget. The treatment options review will compare the current treatment process in relation to other potentially more cost-effective treatment technology solutions to ensure consistent and reliable supply of high quality and safe drinking water.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

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