

## STATEMENT OF CONCERN – EASTERN IRRIGATION DISTRICT APPLICATION

Eastern Irrigation District (EID) proposal to amend licences 1903-09-04-002 and 1998-07-13-002

AWA learned in September that the Eastern Irrigation District is proposing to amend two of its licences. The notice states: *“The applicant has applied to amend two licences with priority numbers 1903-09-04-002 and 1998-07-13-002, to allow the District to provide water for additional purposes. The additional purposes are municipal, agricultural, commercial, industrial, management of fish, management of wildlife, habitat enhancement, and recreation.”*

The amendment relates to two EID licences which, read together, would affect 762,000 acre feet diverted at the Bassano Dam in Bassano, Alberta. The purpose of the current licences is for “irrigation and agriculture (stock-watering)

purposes.” The proposed new uses will be for “municipal, agricultural, commercial, industrial, management of fish, management of wildlife, habitat enhancement, and recreation.” The amendment would allow the EID to allocate the unused portion of its licence and empowers the EID to decide who gets the water in a river system that is already over-allocated.

While AWA is not opposed to some of the proposed uses (fish and wildlife management), we are totally opposed to this amendment. The purposes for the water and its allocation should be subject to the constraints of the Alberta Water Act and dealt with through basin plans and the market mechanisms for license transfers that are available in the Water Act. Within the Water Act, if a transfer was contemplated, Alberta could reclaim back up to 10% of the licence to use for

instream flow needs. Allowing the EID to sell water is not in the best interest of Albertans.

We believe Alberta has already delegated too much control over our precious natural resources, including water, to unaccountable local authorities and irrigation districts. This would be another poor decision if it were to be approved, allowing water allocation decisions without public input or government direction.

AWA is requesting that the amendment proposal be rejected outright and that the EID be directed to deal with their needs in the basin planning process.

*The application for the amendment can be viewed at:* <http://www3.gov.ab.ca/env/water/Regions/Bow/Notices/files/5341.html>