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ENVIRONMENT

Okanagan raised to level two drought rating

BY DANIELLE DUCHARME - GLOBAL NEWS

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The B.C. government has raised the Okanagan to a level two drought rating.

A level two rating means that first indications of a potential water-supply problem have been noted.

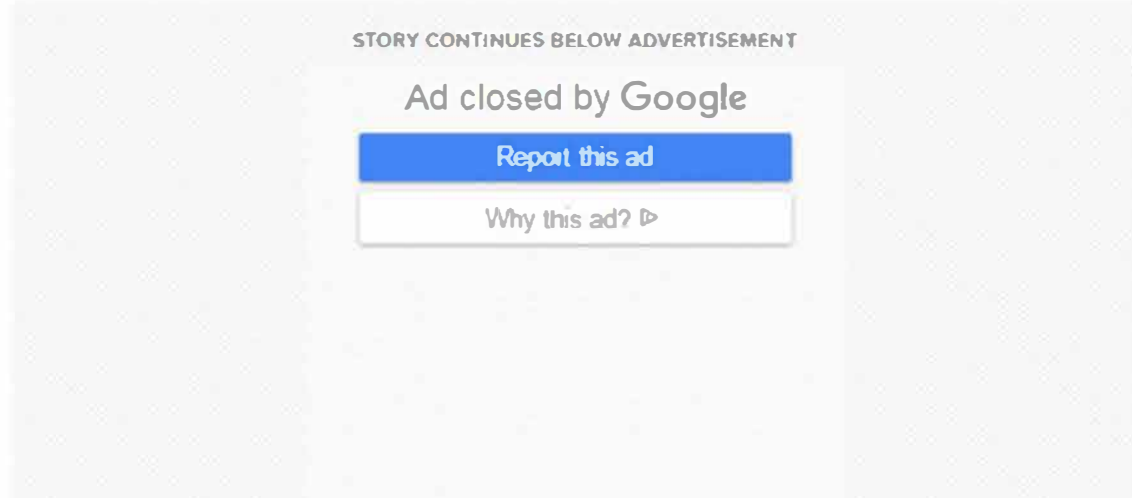
“The potential depends on what the weather will be over the next few weeks here,” said Kelle Garcia, policy and planning specialist with the Okanagan Basin Water Board. “We can still have our June rains and that will ease the low flow situation that we are seeing in streams, but there is a high potential for us to move into higher drought levels.”

The drought rating is based on a low snow pack, early snow melt and a forecast for a hot, dry summer, according to a drought bulletin released by the Okanagan Basin Water Board.

Level	Conditions	Significance	Objective
1 (Green)	Normal Conditions	There is sufficient water to meet human and ecosystem needs	Preparedness
2 (Yellow)	Dry Conditions	First indications of a potential water supply problem	Voluntary conservation
3 (Orange)	Very Dry Conditions	Potentially serious ecosystem or socioeconomic impacts are possible	Voluntary conservation and restrictions
4 (Red)	Extremely Dry Conditions	Water supply insufficient to meet socioeconomic and ecosystem needs	Voluntary conservation, restrictions and regulatory action as necessary

— Summary of B.C. drought levels. Courtesy of Okanagan Drought Bulletin.

Okanagan residents are being strongly encouraged to begin voluntary conservation measures sooner rather than later.



“Having this information early in the season allows farmers to make decisions on their land as far as their water systems, and their crops,” Garcia said. “It also allows residents to make sure that their irrigation systems are working properly and that they are timed properly, they’re maintained, looking for leaks, and you know just getting geared up for using water as efficiently as possible throughout the summer.”

READ MORE: [Environment Canada: High likelihood of a warmer, drier summer than normal in B.C.](#)

“Along with 2015 and 2016, this year is among the lowest snow pack observed in B.C. over the past 40 years,” explained the bulletin.

“Persistent warm weather and limited precipitation in May brought the Okanagan’s snow pack to 4% of normal as of June 1st.

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The Okanagan Basin Water Board said water restrictions are put in place by individual water suppliers.

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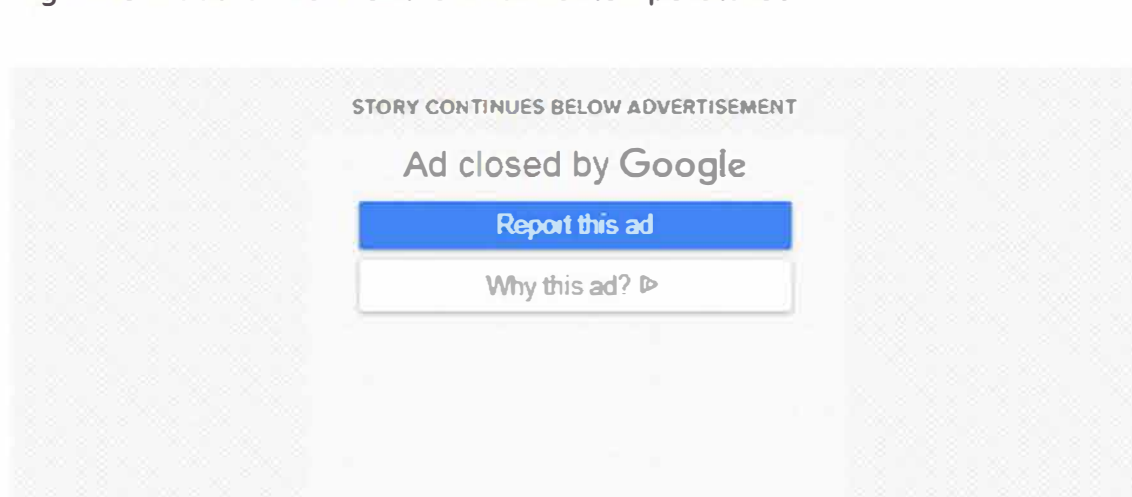
Many suppliers have watering regulations in place every spring and summer, no matter what the drought conditions are like.

Penticton wildfire dangerous sign of ‘substantial drought’ conditions in region: BC Wildfire Service

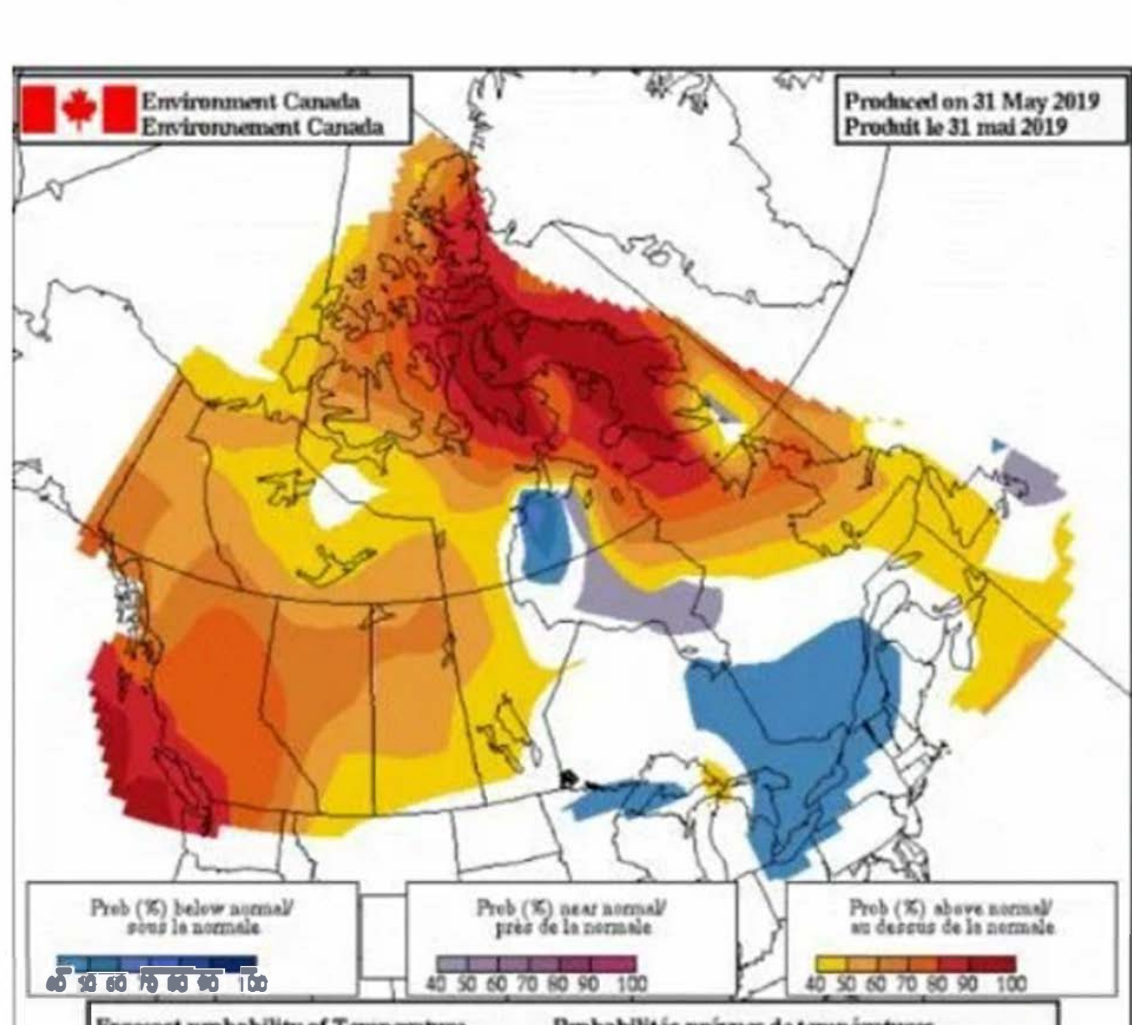
You can click [here](#) to see what the regulations are in your water district.

READ MORE: [Over 200mm rain needed to ease drought conditions in southern Sask.](#)

The bulletin also reports that this summer’s weather forecast indicates a high likelihood of warmer than normal temperatures.



“Cooler temperatures and scattered precipitation this past week were a welcome break, but temperatures are expected to rise again over the next few days.” said the bulletin.



— Canada’s temperature forecast as of May 31st, 2019. Courtesy of Okanagan Drought Bulletin.

VIDEO LINK: https://globalnews.ca/news/5382201/okanagan-raised-to-level-two-drought-rating/beta/?utm_expid=kz0UD5JkQOC06yMqxGqEGCg.1&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F