

SASKATCHEWAN ALLIANCE FOR WATER SUSTAINABILITY

250 2550 – 15th Ave Regina SK, S4P 1A5

<http://lmlsg.ca/saws/>

Tara Clemett
Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan
1500-1920 Broad St
Regina SK S4P 3V2
info@auditor.sk.ca

October 13, 2022

Dear Ms. Clemett:

As a member of SAWS, (Saskatchewan Alliance for Water Sustainability), I am writing to request that the Provincial Auditor audit the Saskatchewan Water Security Agency's (WSA's) activities regarding monitoring and enforcement of illegal drainage activity.

We make this request on behalf of thousands of concerned downstream citizens of the Quill Lakes, Last Mountain Lake, and Qu'Appelle Valley area, who are directly affected by WSA's lack of action.

WSA is the Provincial Agency that is responsible for regulating drainage in Saskatchewan. The WSA Act states that no person shall construct drainage works without prior approval from WSA. Despite this requirement and despite the Provincial Auditor's past recommendations to WSA in 2018 and again in 2021 about regulating illegal drainage, WSA continues to disregard their responsibility to monitor illegal drainage activity. Illegal drainage continues at an alarming rate, with no consequence to those responsible for the damage illegal drainage is causing to property and infrastructure downstream.

Every year since the flooding began in 2006 at the Quill Lakes, new illegal drainage ditches have been constructed sending flood water into the Quill Lakes, causing downstream flooding and threatening a disastrous spill of saline water into Last Mountain Lake.

Even when significant new illegal drainage ditches have been reported to WSA, they fail to take action to bring the illegal works into compliance. It has been 2 years since you recommended WSA monitor and enforce illegal drainage, but WSA have ignored your recommendation.

Concerns over WSA's inaction were also expressed at the SUMA AGM February 2021, where a resolution was passed by 170 communities to lobby the Provincial government for a wetland policy over concerns about damage to infrastructure and costs to communities. <https://suma.org/advocacy/resolutions?id=638>

You may have seen several articles in the Leader Post recently that tells the story of how illegal drainage is affecting property owners downstream. These are honest, hardworking people, and it's heart breaking to hear how they are being ignored by government. Their livelihood is at risk and their properties are being destroyed by flooding. This is becoming a common story within our province and one that must be addressed.

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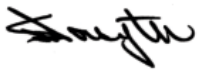
<https://leaderpost.com/news/saskatchewan/drained-sask-farmer-fights-for-creek-in-wild-west-of-illegal-drainage>

<https://leaderpost.com/news/saskatchewan/drained-sask-ranchers-land-dying-without-water-from-reservoir>

As the provincial agency responsible for protecting our water resources and ensuring that drainage of wetlands occur in a responsible way, we strongly believe this audit is necessary, and that WSA follow the terms of the Act, so that downstream properties are protected and will no longer suffer damage from flooding.

For this reason, we would appreciate discussing this issue further with you and the possibility of the Provincial Auditor conducting a new WSA audit. Thank you for your attention and consideration to this very important matter and we look forward to discussing this further with you.

Sincerely,



Sherry Forsyth
SAWS

saskaws@gmail.com



Aura Lee MacPherson
SAWS