

# Historic investment to expand irrigation

## Technical Fact Sheet

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### Partnership

Alberta's government, the Canada Infrastructure Bank, and a consortium of eight irrigation districts are investing \$815 million to modernize irrigation district infrastructure and increase water storage capacity in southern Alberta.

### Project Details

This investment will go toward four off-stream reservoirs and 56 modernization projects, including converting open canals to underground pipeline systems. Projects will be delivered by the irrigation districts and are focused on increasing water conveyance efficiency and allowing more acres to be irrigated within the same water allocation.

Modernizing and building new irrigation infrastructure will:

- increase irrigated acreage
- increase primary crop production
- improve water use efficiency
- increase water storage capacity
- enhance water security
- provide flood protection
- support long-term value-added processing activity.

### Benefits

As a result of this investment irrigated acres are expected to increase by up to 208,000 acres, which is almost 15 per cent more than the current 1.44 million irrigated acres in the eight impacted irrigation districts. These projects are also expected to create

up to 6,800 direct and indirect permanent jobs and up to 1,280 construction jobs.

### Investment Details

This is the largest one-time irrigation investment in Alberta's history.

This \$815-million investment includes:

- \$244.5 million grant contribution to the eight irrigation districts from Alberta's government (30 per cent contribution);
- \$163 million contributed initially by the consortium of eight Irrigation Districts (20 per cent contribution); and
- \$407.5 million financed by the Canada Infrastructure Bank, to be paid back by the irrigation districts over time (50 per cent contribution).

### Canada Infrastructure Bank

The Canada Infrastructure Bank is mandated to invest \$35 billion in federal funding and attract private sector investment into new revenue-generating infrastructure projects.

This is the first project announced under the Canada Infrastructure Bank's recently released \$10-billion Growth Plan.

### Irrigation Districts

Irrigation Districts are board-governed, non-profit corporations enabled under the *Irrigation Districts Act*, which serve over 1.4 million acres of irrigated agricultural production.

Collectively, IDs own, operate, and maintain 170 major irrigation structures, 7,600 km of canals and pipelines, and 41 irrigation storage reservoirs.

The eight irrigation districts participating in the consortium and investment include:

- Bow River Irrigation District
- Eastern Irrigation District
- Lethbridge Northern Irrigation District
- Raymond Irrigation District
- St. Mary River Irrigation District
- Taber Irrigation District
- United Irrigation District
- Western Irrigation District.

## Further Background

Alberta has more than 1.7 million irrigated acres, including over 1.4 million acres served by irrigation districts.

The irrigation industry contributes:

- up to \$3.6 billion annually to Alberta's GDP, which represents about 20 per cent of the agri-food sector GDP on only 4.7 per cent of the province's cultivated land base.
- about \$2.4 billion in annual labour income and supports about 56,000 jobs.

Irrigation-related agricultural processing generates about \$2 billion in total annual sales and accounts for about 18 per cent of total provincial food processing sales.

## Alberta's Recovery Plan

This initiative is part of the more than \$10 billion infrastructure spending announced as part of Alberta's Recovery Plan.

This spending includes:

- \$6.9 billion Budget 2020 capital spending
- \$980 million accelerated for Capital Maintenance and Renewal
- \$200 million for Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program and water infrastructure projects
- \$600 million in strategic infrastructure projects, \$500 million in municipal infrastructure
- \$1.5 billion for Keystone XL