

June 22, 2021

Natural Resources Conservation Board approves Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir Project

The Natural Resources Conservation Board (NRCB) has approved the Springbank Off-Stream Reservoir Project, finding it to be in the public interest. The Board concluded that the Project will provide much-needed flood protection to the City of Calgary.

The approval is based on the NRCB's consideration of the social, economic, and environmental effects of the Project and follows a thorough review process, including an 11-day virtual hearing that was livestreamed to the public. The Board found that the Project's considerable positive social and economic effects outweigh any adverse economic, social, and environmental effects. The NRCB approval requires Alberta Transportation, the Project proponent, to implement commitments made in the application and throughout the hearing, as well as conditions imposed by the Board, which together are intended to mitigate any significant environmental effects associated with the Project. Before coming into effect, the NRCB approval requires authorization by an Order in Council by the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta.

The Project is intended to work in tandem with the Glenmore Reservoir in Calgary to mitigate damage from flooding up to and including the size of the 2013 flood, and will provide a level of protection from floods larger than 2013. During flood events, water will be diverted from the Elbow River into an off-stream reservoir to be constructed near Springbank Road and Highway 22, approximately 15 km west of Calgary. Once the flood risk subsides, the reservoir water will be returned to the Elbow River in a controlled manner.

The flood of 2013 was devastating to southern Alberta, resulting in five deaths as well as approximately \$5 billion in financial losses and damage to both public and private property. In addition to causing devastation to many homes, the flooding also caused damage to roads, rail lines, transit systems, pedestrian bridges, parks, and more than 100 km of riverside pathways. Estimates indicate that approximately \$1.5 billion in Calgary alone would be at risk from future floods of the Elbow River of the same magnitude if no upstream flood protection is in place.

The Natural Resources Conservation Board is an independent, quasi-judicial board of the Government of Alberta, established by the *Natural Resources Conservation Board Act*. It is responsible for determining whether natural resource projects are in the public interest.

Related information:

[Background](#)
[Board decision report NR 2021-01](#)

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