



Statement on High-Capacity Wells for Island Farming

Attribution: Wayne Townshend, Chair of PEI Potato Board

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Today's announcement made by the Provincial government to adjust regulations to allow Island farmers to access water for supplemental irrigation via high-capacity wells is welcome news.

This decision to implement the recommendation from the Legislative Standing Committee means our local family farms will have another option to help them handle future drought while producing food for those on and off the Island. This lack of access to water has been a consistent strain on Island farming families, and the change will help supplement natural rainfall, if needed.

Other industries on PEI, aside from agriculture, have been permitted high-capacity wells for nearly two decades. While it has taken a long time to get to this point, this is a forward-thinking decision by Minister Steven Myers, Minister Bloyce Thompson and the departments of Environment, Energy, and Climate Change, and Agriculture and Land. Granting this water access will help our multi-generational family farms survive in the face of climate change.

Industry, government, and stakeholders such as the PEI Watershed Alliance must now work collaboratively to ensure clear regulations and protections are in place for the responsible use of our water. We believe that sustainable farming includes supplemental irrigation strategies, reduced tillage, crop diversification, cover cropping, adoption of new varieties, and improving soil health. We support a science-based approach to water access with considerations for long-term, sustainable agricultural practices.

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About the PEI Potato Board:

The PEI Potato Board represents more than 175 potato farms across PEI that grow one-quarter of Canada's potatoes, injects more than 1.3 billion dollars into the Island economy and employs approximately eight percent of the Island's workforce. For more information about the Board and its members, visit: www.peipotato.org

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