

International River Improvements Act

Annual Report for 2025

The goal of the *International River Improvements Act* (the Act) is to ensure that the development and use of Canada's water resources in international river basins serve the national interest. The Act also enables Canada to meet its obligations under the *Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909*. The Act has been in force since July 11, 1955, and the responsibility for administering the Act has been with the Minister of Environment¹ since June 1971.

Section 51 of the Act requires the Minister to table a report on operations under the Act in each House of Parliament after the end of each calendar year. This annual report covers activities under the Act during the 2025 calendar year.

Under the Act, a license is required to build, operate, or maintain an international river improvement that alters the flow of water out of Canada or impacts the use of a receiving water body outside of Canada. International river improvements may include hydraulic structures such as dams, obstructions, canals, reservoirs, pipelines, or any other works that may affect water outside of Canada. The Minister may grant licences *under the International River Improvements Regulations* (the Regulations) for a period of up to 50 years. The Regulations allow certain international river improvements to be excepted from the application of the Act if one of the following conditions applies:

- a. there are insignificant effects on river flows or levels at the Canada – United States boundary (i.e., effect of less than 3 cm on the level or less than 0.3 cubic metres per second on the flow of water at the Canada-United States boundary), or
- b. the improvement is of a temporary nature, to be operated for a period not exceeding two years.

International river improvement projects seeking an exception under these conditions must notify the Minister and submit the information required under the Regulations.

¹ The Act and this report refer to the "Minister of Environment". At the time of tabling this report, the Minister's title was "Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature".

Activity in 2025

Licenses

In 2025, the Minister issued no licences under the Act and the Regulations.

Exception Notifications

In 2025, the Minister issued two exception notifications under the Act and the Regulations.

On April 15, 2025, the Minister received a formal notification under the Regulations for the Coffee Gold Mine Project in the Yukon Territory. The project drains into the Yukon River, which crosses the international boundary near Eagle, Alaska. On June 17, 2025, the Minister confirmed that the project was excepted from the application of the Act because its effects on water flows and levels were determined to be less than 0.3 cubic metres per second or 3 centimetres at the Canada-United States boundary.

On May 23, 2025, the Minister received a formal notification under the Regulations for the Eskay Creek Revitalization Project in northwestern British Columbia. The project drains into the Unuk River which crosses the international boundary near Border Lake Provincial Park in British Columbia. On August 19, 2025, the Minister confirmed that the project was excepted from the application of the Act because its effects on water flows and levels were determined to be less than 0.3 cubic metres per second or 3 centimetres at the Canada-United States boundary.

Cat. No.: En11-4E-PDF

ISBN: 1927-9442

EC26146

Unless otherwise specified, you may not reproduce materials in this publication, in whole or in part, for the purposes of commercial redistribution without prior written permission from Environment and Climate Change Canada's copyright administrator. To obtain permission to reproduce Government of Canada materials for commercial purposes, apply for Crown Copyright Clearance by contacting:

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Public Information Centre

Place Vincent Massey building

351 St-Joseph boulevard

Gatineau, Quebec K1A 0H3

Toll free: 1-800-668-6767

Email: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

Cover photo: © Environment and Climate Change Canada

© His Majesty the King in Right of Canada, represented by the
Minister of the Environment, Climate Change and Nature, 2026

Aussi disponible en français