

WORKING FOR WATERSHEDS:

Opportunities for Growth in British Columbia's Watershed Sector

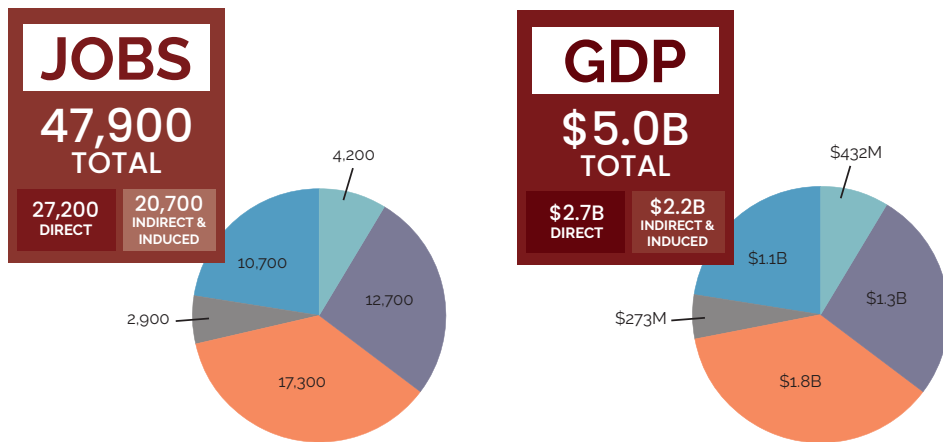
MAY 2021

This study led by The Delphi Group:

- Defines BC's watershed sector and its current economic and employment contribution
- Forecasts the watershed sector's growth potential to 2030
- Quantifies the returns from a Watershed Security Fund investment

1 BC's watershed sector is a major employer and contributes billions to the province's economy.

The watershed sector encompasses activities that directly support the maintenance, restoration, or improvement of healthy watersheds. **In 2019, the watershed sector is estimated to have directly employed 27,200 people and more broadly supported jobs for 47,900 British Columbians in five sub-sectors (below).** This level of employment compares favourably with other sectors, including agriculture, mining, and oil and gas. In 2019, the watershed sector contributed an estimated **\$5 billion** to the province's GDP.



2

The watershed sector supports a diverse spectrum of jobs in rural and urban areas, with widespread opportunities for growth across all five sub-sectors.

From entry-level to skilled, seasonal to permanent, technical to policy, and urban to rural, the watershed sector supports British Columbians at all career stages and specialization levels.

Many opportunities exist to amplify growth and capitalize on momentum, including in the areas of natural asset management, private sector innovation and watertech, and support for Indigenous employment and economic development.



Photo credit: BCWF Wetlands Education Program

3

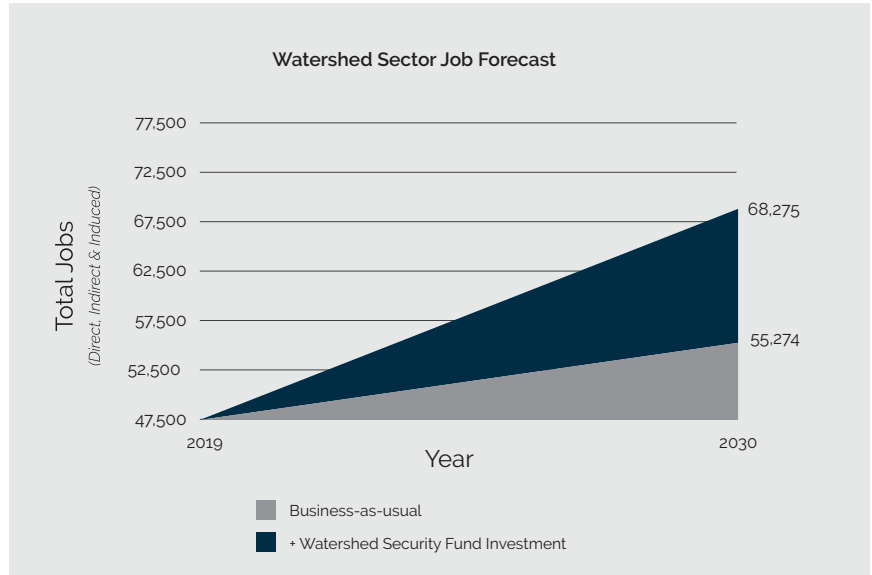
A Watershed Security Fund investment will optimize the sector's growth and yield significant employment and economic returns.

A \$100 million/year Watershed Security Fund investment over 10 years will create an estimated **13,000** more jobs and contribute **\$1.3 billion** more to provincial GDP by 2030 than under a business-as-usual scenario.

This growth is in addition to the massive economic costs avoided through investments in watershed health (e.g., costs associated with response and recovery from floods, droughts and other water-related climate disasters).

The Watershed Security Fund will play a key role in attracting other investments, including federal funding, private sector investments, and local government capacity and resources.

The Fund offers a vehicle for the Province to make lasting gains on reconciliation and Indigenous economic development and employment, stimulate rural economic opportunities, and achieve climate and biodiversity targets.



For less cost than building one major bridge, the provincial government can create a legacy of long-term employment and healthy watersheds throughout the province of British Columbia.