EAST HANTS

STAFF REPORT

Infrastructure & Operations Department

Subject:	***Rural Bulk Water Feasibility***
To:	Executive Committee
Date Prepared:	April 2026
Related Motions:	C25(314)
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Approved by:	Kim Ramsay, CAO

Summary

The summer of 2025 had drought conditions that impacted all of Nova Scotia. Many private well users experienced limitations in their regular access to water, demonstrated by the increase in bulk water station use. During the drought, the municipality provided support programs for residents such as opening the EHAC and providing potable water through EMO programming, which was well received by the public.

The current bulk water station operated by the East Hants Water Utility is located in Enfield, which is not central to the rural areas of East Hants. A feasibility study to locate a bulk water station in rural East Hants could be completed to determine potential viable water sources with respect to volume, water quality, and cost considerations.

Financial Impact Statement

The anticipated price range for a feasibility type of study is between estimated to be in the range of $100,000 to $120,000. It would not be appropriate for the Water Utility to cover the cost of the study.

Following any study there would be further required spending for a detailed technical study of a specific source followed by detailed and design and construction at what would be projected as a significant capital cost.

Recommendation

It is not being recommended to proceed with a Rural Bulk Water Feasibility Study at this time.

Recommended Motion

N/A

Background

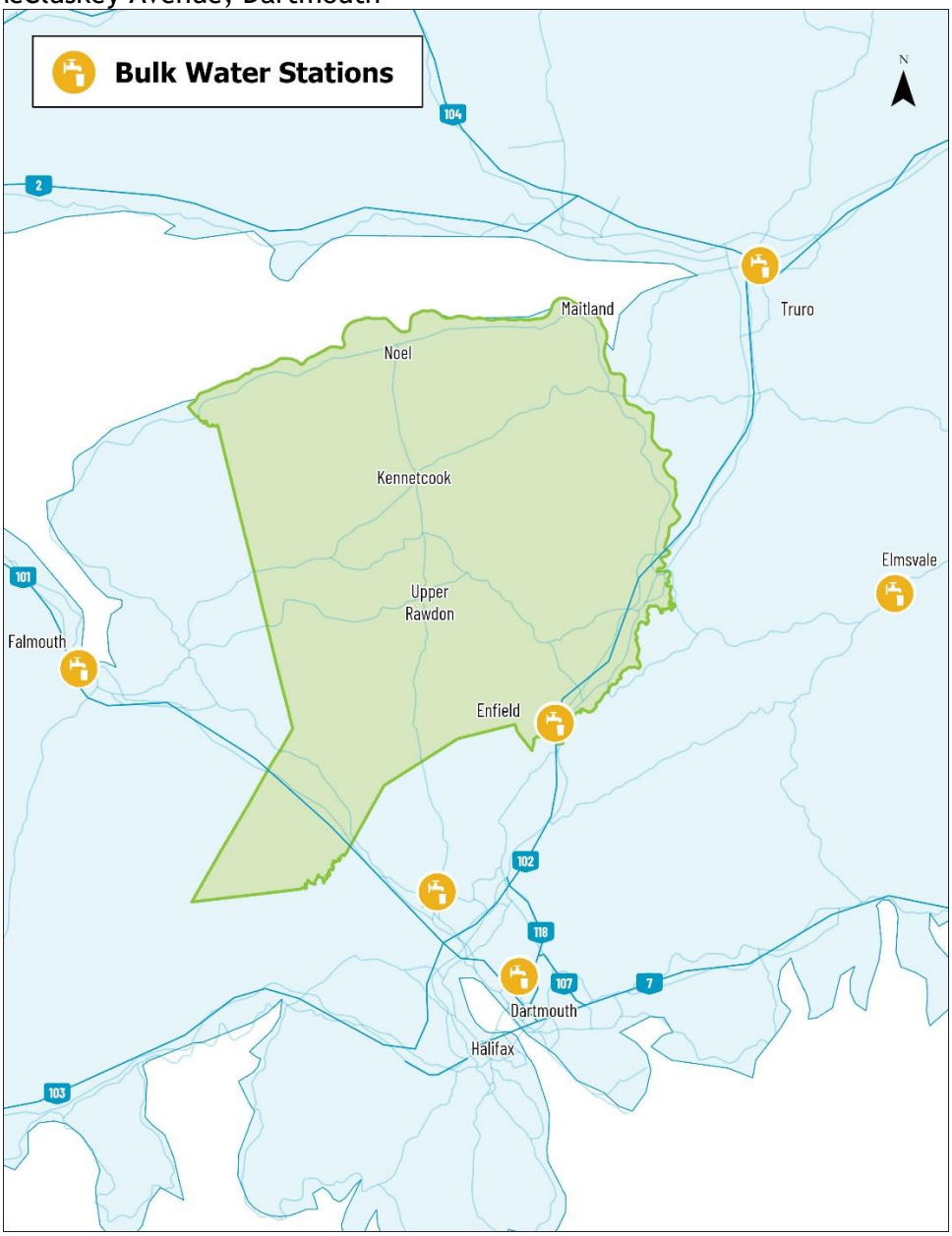
In September 2025, Council requested a report to summarize the potential scope and cost for the completion of a Rural Bulk Water Feasibility study, in response to the drought conditions experienced across Nova Scotia in 2025.

Current East Hants Bulk Water Station Location

- 129 Old Enfield Road, Enfield

Other surrounding Bulk Water Stations outside of East Hants

- 8 Station Lane, Falmouth
- 25 Lorne Street, Truro
- 11318 Hwy 224, Elmsvale (Middle Musquodoboit)
- 248 Beaver Bank Road, Sackville
- 42 Gloria McCluskey Avenue, Dartmouth



Discussion

Source – Volume Potential

A study would need to identify a number of potential locations to compare potential and viability. If there were multiple viable options, those should be ranked in a comparison table. Potential locations that may be identified by a consultant could include;

- Noel Lake
- Valley Lake
- A provincially mapped aquifer in Kennetcook (along Highway 236, near Highway 354)
- A provincially mapped aquifer near Upper Nine Mile River (along Highway 14)

Location

The discussion of the motion (C25(314)) was to seek out potential bulk water options that would be geographically closer to more rural parts of East Hants. Any studied sources would need to be centrally located to rural communities, while also considering bulk water availability surrounding East Hants' boundaries.

Quality Control (Source Water Protection Requirements)

The condition and quality of any water source considered would need to be analyzed to determine the level of treatment required to deliver potable water to the public. The watershed catchment of the location would need to be mapped, with levels of risks identified to consider long term service delivery.

Cost Considerations of Source (Build/Operate)

The appropriate treatment required for the source condition and volume of a location will impact capital construction costs. There would need to be existing adequate power supply, or power infrastructure expansion would be included to any possible future project scope. Additionally, the ongoing operations of a potential site would need to be considered with respect to staffing, treatment supplies, power consumption, etc.

A lake source would have ease of access to study, but would be more susceptible to drought and require greater treatment management. A well source could be harder to access for a review of the initial water quality, and the flow rates of a potential well field would need to be understood. Water sampling would be required for any source being considered.

Uniacke Servicing Feasibility Study & General Timing

Where there is already a servicing study being planned for the Uniacke area, it would not be considered in this scope. If a public water utility were to be setup in the Uniacke area, establishing a bulk water location as part of that public system could be considered.

The Mount Uniacke Servicing Study is taking place in fiscal 2026-27 with a budget of $300,000, funded by the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). A new system with the potential for a treatment plant and distribution network (new housing) made it eligible to be funded through HAF, with no impact to the Water Utility.

This study may identify a water source compatible with a future additional bulk water service. The

result of the Mount Uniacke study could make an additional Rural Bulk Water Feasibility Study irrelevant or be a major factor to consider in a report. Therefore, if a study were to proceed, it should happen after the completion and review of the Mount Uniacke study.

Bulk Water Rates

It is unlikely for the cost for water produced to be included in the study, however it is a factor that needs to flagged. As a remote site, unconnected to a larger water treatment distribution system, it is unlikely to be as cost effective in providing water, and the Utility would need to factor that into rate setting.

Well & Septic Loan Program

The municipality now offers a loan program to support upgrades to well and septic systems. Information is available on the municipal website on the application process.

Alternatives

Limit Scope to only Lakes

This could reduce the study cost; however, it may limit the potential of finding a viable source that could produce adequate volume in drought conditions.

Attachments

N/A