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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Environment

### **MORE GOVERNMENT HELP TO MITIGATE PINE BEETLE DAMAGE**

VICTORIA – The B.C. government is investing \$95,000 to learn how better water stewardship may help buffer the impact of the mountain pine beetle infestation, Environment Minister Barry Penner announced today.

Forest companies and professionals, land managers and local governments all stand to benefit from studies already underway at the University of British Columbia.

“The pine beetle infestation has harmed more than trees,” said Penner. “It’s changed the way forests affect water flow, flooding and runoff, so we need to find out exactly how much damage has been done and how we can deal with the situation.”

Dr. Younes Alila and Dr. Markus Weiler of UBC’s Department of Forest Resources Management both received research grants totalling \$95,000 from the Ministry of Environment.

“Serving a common cause and the public good is something that can only be achieved when academe and government work in tandem,” said Alila. “Our research program will help establish a sounder footing for addressing the broader effects of the Pine Beetle infestation.”

“Increased streamflows, and hence flood risks, are an unavoidable consequence when trees are lost,” said Weiler. “Our findings will provide tools for industry and government to mitigate those impacts, particularly with regard to public safety.”

Reversing some of the damage caused by the beetle epidemic remains prominent among the B.C. government’s activities. Initiatives in progress include:

- Looking at ways to use the infested wood as a clean energy source.
- Clearing infested wood from provincial parks to improve fire safety.
- Reforesting areas impacted by the mountain pine beetle that are not being harvested by forest licensees.
- Investing \$3.6 million in research into beetle-related products and manufacturing processes.
- Funding to regional beetle action coalitions to help communities expand and diversify their economies.
- Fostering economic alternatives in infested areas, through activities such as geoscience projects that assess mineral deposit potential.

Over the past year, the B.C. government has contributed \$160, 000 to research that will provide greater insight into the pine beetle's impact on water systems. Supporting the scientific community is integral to finding solutions and to the provincial government's overarching goal of leading the world in environmental management.

Visit [www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca) to learn more about how the Government of British Columbia is addressing environmental issues and [www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pinebeetle) for government's Mountain Pine Beetle Action Plan.

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