



# WESTERN IRRIGATION DISTRICT

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June 23, 2025

Staff Sergeant Mark Wielgosz  
Strathmore RCMP Detachment  
500 West Pine Road  
Strathmore, Alberta T1P 1J3

Dear Staff Sergeant Wielgosz,

I am writing on behalf of our organization of approximately 600 local members to bring to your attention a serious issue affecting our irrigation operations. Recently, there has been a significant increase in the theft of pivot cables from farms within our district. These thefts are causing substantial financial losses and disrupting essential agricultural activities.

**Impact:** The theft of pivot cables is particularly damaging because it directly affects our irrigation watering systems, which are crucial for crop production. Without these systems, farmers are unable to adequately water their crops, leading to reduced yields and financial hardship. The cost of replacing stolen cables and repairing damaged equipment is substantial, further straining the financial resources of our farmers.

**Frequency and Pattern of Thefts:** These thefts have become noticeably more frequent, occurring often during nighttime hours when farms are less monitored. There appears to be a pattern, with multiple farms targeted in a short period. This suggests that the thefts may be organized and carried out by individuals familiar with the area and the value of the equipment.

- The average cost of repairs and replacements due to these thefts is estimated to be around \$30,000 per incident, with some cases reaching as high as \$80,000. (MLA, 2025)
- Copper wire theft across Alberta has increased by an alarming 93% between 2021 and 2024. (MLA, 2025)
- RCMP spokesman Cpl. Troy Savinkoff reports that losses from copper wire theft, including damages to property, exceed \$10 million annually in Alberta. (Lohia, 2025)
- The RCMP has reported an 88% increase in cases of copper wire theft over the same period. (Lohia, 2025)

**Community Impact:** Our irrigation farming community is a tight-knit group, and these thefts are causing widespread concern and anxiety. Farmers are investing in additional security measures, which add to their operational costs. The sense of vulnerability is affecting the overall morale and productivity of the community.

**Concerns Regarding Reporting:** It has come to our attention that some of our irrigators have been advised not to worry about it, just file an insurance claim. This has caused frustration and is a concern for our organization.

**Strengthening Community Involvement:** To effectively prevent these thefts, we believe that strengthening community involvement is crucial. Some of our proposed strategies may already be in effect but we are not aware of them:

- **Regular Meetings:** Organizing regular meetings between farmers, local law enforcement, and community members to discuss concerns, share information, and develop preventive measures.
- **Security Workshops:** Hosting workshops to provide farmers with information on effective security measures, such as installing surveillance cameras, using motion-sensor lights, and securing valuable equipment.
- **Collaboration with Crime Stoppers:** Enlisting the assistance of Calgary Crime Stoppers to help raise awareness and gather anonymous tips from the public. This could be an effective way to involve the broader community in identifying and apprehending those responsible for these thefts.

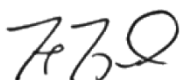
The Western Irrigation District is committed to assisting where possible, including providing a venue for meetings and workshops, and facilitating communication between irrigators and law enforcement. We currently have a notice on our website for all irrigators, emphasizing that their cooperation is vital in preventing further thefts and outlining some precautionary measures.

**Request for Action:** We kindly request that the RCMP address this issue. We realize manpower can be an issue, however increased patrols in rural areas, especially during nighttime hours, could help deter these thefts.

Our irrigators rely heavily on the support and protection of law enforcement. By addressing this issue, the RCMP can help ensure the sustainability and security of our local agriculture.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your prompt response and any updates on the actions being taken to combat these thefts.

Sincerely,



Troy Tangedal  
General Manager  
Western Irrigation District