



ATLANTIC POLICY CONGRESS OF FIRST NATIONS CHIEFS SECRETARIAT

Federal Budget affirms innovative First Nations-led clean water a priority

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Atlantic First Nations Chiefs applaud the Federal Government's budget priorities related to Canada's indigenous peoples. In particular, the government's commitment to the establishment of innovative First Nations-led service delivery models for Water and Wastewater will benefit Atlantic First Nations communities, many of whom have been facing a water crisis without access to clean and safe drinking water and wastewater.

Through the vision of the Atlantic Chiefs, the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APC), in partnership with Dalhousie University, Halifax Water and Accelerator Inc. have developed a preliminary business plan with governance structure recommendations for an Atlantic First Nations Water Authority to operate and maintain community water systems.

A dedicated, independent regional water authority will improve public health and safety while also ensuring positive economic and environmental outcomes. Creation of this water authority is fundamental to the long-term cultural and economic growth of First Nations communities in the region.

"With the support outlined in yesterday's budget, Atlantic First Nations can continue to move toward controlling our outcomes and ensuring safe water for generations to come," says Chief Bob Gloade, APC Co-Chair, "Continued federal budget investments will lead to improvements and measurable results for Atlantic Canada's fastest growing population."

Chief Candice Paul, APC Co-Chair, agrees with Chief Gloade.

"We were pleased to see the government underscore in this budget that 'the design, delivery and control of services are led by Indigenous Peoples for Indigenous Peoples'. Ownership is an important aspect of reconciliation. When our communities control their own outcomes and are invested in their own success, improvements are bound to follow," says Chief Paul.

In addition to the comprehensive scientific research that has been undertaken and technical expertise provided, the innovative First Nations Water Authority is based on best practices in utility water and wastewater service delivery, financial modeling, and good governance. Just as important, the foundation of this initiative is based on broad and in-depth input from all First Nations communities in the Atlantic Region. The APC has begun the process of informing and engaging non-native community and business leaders, policy makers and elected officials at all three levels of government.

In November 2017, an APC-commissioned poll by Corporate Research Associates shows that 75 percent of Atlantic Canadians support First Nations having an independently owned and operated water authority. Further to this, 98% of Atlantic Canadians hold the belief that all residents should have access to clean and safe drinking water, regardless of location.

About APC

Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat is a policy research and advocacy organization that analyzes and develops culturally relevant alternatives to federal policy for 30 Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, Passamaquoddy and Innu communities and peoples. If you have any questions, please direct them to: John Paul, Executive Director. He can be reached by e-mail, John.Paul@apcfn.ca, or by phone at (902)-435-8021 and (902)-830-5023.