



# Canadians Need Legally Enforced Drinking Water Regulations



## Why this petition matters

- Many Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality exist due to health concerns, but guidelines are not legally enforceable and do not necessarily set a drinking water advisory in motion, despite some of these health reasons being related to serious, permanent conditions, such as permanent neurological conditions.
- The United States has the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR), which are **legally** enforceable primary standards and treatment techniques that apply to public water systems. Similarly, the European Union has a **legally-binding** Drinking Water Directive (DWD), Canada has *guidelines* for drinking water, not *regulations*, guidelines are not **legally-binding**.
- As of September 7, 2024, there were 32 long-term drinking water advisories in effect in 30 First Nations communities. Drinking water advisories become long-term advisories when they have been in place, consistently, for one year.
- There is a First Nations community in Canada, Neskantaga First Nation, that has been under a drinking water advisory consistently for over 29 and a half years!
- As of September 19, 2024, there were 44 short-term drinking water advisories in place in First Nations communities south of 60, excluding those in the British Columbia region. Some of the communities have recurring and lengthy short-term drinking water advisories.
- Rural communities often have water test results that do not meet the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality.
- Water is constantly changing due to seasons, rainfall, runoff, and changes in climate. We cannot test our way to safe drinking water, because what we test for today might not be there, but it might be there tomorrow. Therefore, effective drinking water treatment systems that are capable of removing all possible contaminants must be built.

This petition has been coordinated in partnership between Jane Watson, Advocacy Chair, CFUW Georgetown; Jesse Cardinal, Executive Director, Keepers of the Water; Nicole Hancock, Executive Director, Safe Drinking Water Foundation, and Susan Blacklin, author of Water Confidential: Witnessing Justice Denied – The Fight for Safe Drinking Water in Indigenous and Rural Communities in Canada.

# Canadians and Canadian Organizations That Have Endorsed This Petition



*"Water holds no boundaries, protecting source waters, both quantity and quality, at a federal level is the single most important and crucial aspect of implementing national drinking water regulations."* – Jesse Cardinal, Executive Director, Keepers of the Water

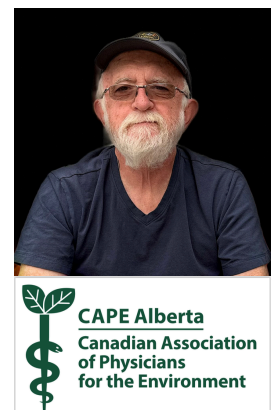
*"I would like to share a quote that Dr. Hans often said, 'Compare driving on Canada's highways with only guidelines and no regulations to see how necessary it is to have National Drinking Water Regulations.'" – Roberta Neapetung, Water Systems Operator, Yellow Quill First Nation*



**RIGHTINGRELATIONS**  
*Adult Education for Social Change*

*"Canada cannot build right relations with Indigenous people without taking concrete actions for change. Clear regulations to ensure safe drinking water is an essential step in laying the groundwork for this change."* – Ally Crockford, National Coordinator, Righting Relations Canada

*"As a frontline physician in Indigenous communities for almost 30 years, I witness the real impacts of water insecurity daily; it is beyond time for Canada to enact and enforce strict drinking water regulations."* – Dr. John O'Connor; Family Physician in Alberta; Board Member of Keepers of the Water, Safe Drinking Water Foundation, and Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment Alberta



# AKI



*“When it comes to drinking water on First Nations, it is clear that the only thing that’s going to work is ‘different’. We encourage regulations and new social enterprise business models to get us what we all want.”*

- Shaun Loney, Ashoka Fellow and Founder of Aki Energy

*“Legally enforceable regulations that are sufficient to safeguard human health and that are actually enforced are necessary for ALL Canadians.”* - Nicole Hancock, Executive Director, Safe Drinking Water Foundation



*“The comprehensive stewardship of drinking water from ‘source to tap’ is essential to the future of all Canadians. This can only be achieved by developing sustainable*

*partnerships between First Nations and all levels of government within the framework of national drinking water regulations.”* - Bruce Davidson, Co-founder and Spokesman, Concerned Citizens of Walkerton

*“Water Watchers supports the call to establish National Drinking Water Regulations without further delay, in accordance with UNDRIP.”*

- Arlene Slocombe, Executive Director, Water Watchers



**Water Watchers**  
Water for Life, Not Profit



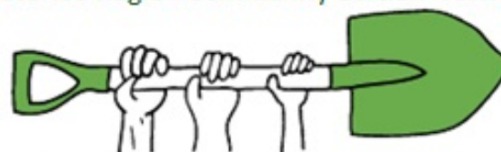
**SOROPTIMIST®**  
Investing in Dreams

*“Recognizing that Canada supported the United Nations declaration that safe drinking water is deemed a basic human right, Soroptimists International Western Canada Region fully endorses the need for national drinking water regulations.”* - Carell Wingrave, Region Advocacy Chair  
Soroptimist International Western Canada Region

*"We know that water is life and that water that is not safe to drink will harm us. We consider access to clean, safe water, that is protected source waters, and healthy food to be a human right."*

- Doug Jones, Chair, Waterloo Region Community Garden Network

Waterloo Region Community Garden Network



Growing Healthy Communities

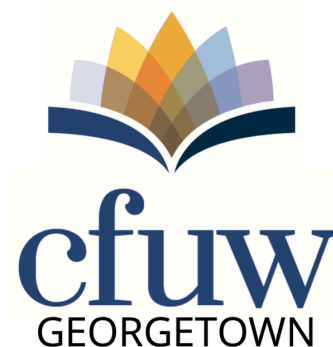
[www.wrcgardennetwork.ca](http://www.wrcgardennetwork.ca)



*"A rights-based approach to water protects both water and people and will fulfill Canada's international obligations."* - Maude

Barlow, activist and author

*"CFUW advocates for communities across Canada and around the world to allow all women and girls to realize their potential. As women are disproportionately affected by poor water quality, CFUW Georgetown adds its name to those of others who endorse the petition for safe drinking water regulations."* - Jane Watson, Advocacy Chair, CFUW Georgetown



**JOHN HUMPHREY CENTRE**  
for **PEACE** and **HUMAN RIGHTS**

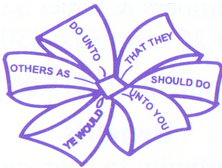
*"Correcting the injustices of our historical genocide demands that we confront the legacy of exclusion and erasure,*

*recognizing that access to clean and safe water is not only a human right but essential to health, well-being, and the fulfillment of human potential—without it, communities remain marginalized, and it's time we honour the treaty obligations we all share."* - Renée Vaugeois, Executive Director, John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights

*"For decades,  
the National  
Council of*



*women of Canada has championed the right to clean drinking water for all Canadians, focusing particularly on rural and Indigenous communities. We stand united not only with the petition's signatories but with all Canadians, as failing to demand this fundamental right contradicts our national values. An urgent and sustainable resolution to this crisis is imperative."* – Marianne Wilkinson, President, The National Council of Women of Canada



**Vancouver Council of Women**

*entering water meant for human consumption throughout the nation. Guidelines are not regulations. All governments must pass laws that are enforceable and have consequences for the perpetrators."* – Alberta Rudolf, President, Vancouver Council of Women



**cfuw fcfd**  
ONTARIO COUNCIL

"CFUW Ontario Council advocates for the advancement of the status of women, human rights and the common good. It is unacceptable that the country with the second largest freshwater supply per person (3.5 trillion cubic meters of renewable freshwater) cannot ensure that its Indigenous peoples' basic rights to safe water supplies are being met.– Shame on Canada." – Sandra Shaw, President (2024–2026), CFUW Ontario Council

*"The Council of Canadians fights for safe, clean water for everyone. We support Indigenous peoples' right to self-government and self-determination. Greater control by and for First Nations over water is a basic step toward reconciliation, a requirement of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and a necessary precondition to ending drinking water advisories in First Nations for good."*

Robin Tress - Director of Campaigns and Organizing

*"With Drinking Water Regulations we can hold civil servants, consultants and engineers, in collaboration with scientists, responsible to finance, design, build and maintain effective water treatment systems that enable water treatment operators to consistently produce drinking water that meets or exceeds the recommendations set by World Health Organization."*

- Susan Blacklin, author of Water Confidential:

Witnessing Justice Denied - The Fight for Safe Drinking Water in Indigenous and Rural Communities in Canada

