

Canada's Freshwater Future

BACKGROUND

The climate crisis is a water crisis. The UN IPCC states that Canada spends \$1.9 billion annually on damages caused by climate-exacerbated floods, storms, droughts, and wildfires. These mounting water issues undercut all Canadians' cultural, socio-economic, community health and security issues. Moreover, rapidly accelerating freshwater issues are already impacting Canada, including ecological integrity, food security, energy production, regional economic development, Canada-US. Relations, and municipal drinking water and wastewater systems.

AN INDEPENDENT CANADA WATER AGENCY (CWA)

Canadian freshwater management is spread over 20+ federal departments, leading to ineffective management, poor decision making and limited conflict resolution. An independent Canada Water Agency will act as a catalyst to advance the necessary water law, policy, and governance reforms needed to bring Canada's freshwater management regime into the 21st century. The Agency would work closely with and support Provinces, Territories, indigenous nations, local communities, scientists, and researchers to find the best ways to keep our water safe, clean, and well-managed.

CANADA WATER ACT

The renewal of the 50-year-old [Canada Water Act](#) is one important avenue to address current and future water issues, including but not limited to climate change resilience, improved ecosystem protection, Indigenous water rights and shared authority, improved governance and the evolving role of the private insurance industry in flood risk mitigation. Canada can become a leader in transboundary water management and undertake a legislative co-drafting process with Indigenous Nations rooted in reconciliation and consistent with UNDRIP.

FRESH WATER ACTION PLAN (FWAP)

Promised in the 2021 Liberal Platform, the historic \$1 billion over 10 years represents a critical and necessary investment that is necessary across Canada. Moreover, it matches our US neighbour's initiative to invest in water and recognize water security as a national threat.

| | 2021 Liberal Platform | 2022 Mandate Letters | 2022 Federal Budget | Actions Taken |
|------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Canada Water Agency | Establish and fully fund a Canada Water Agency in 2022 | Continue work to create a new Canada Water Agency | \$8.7 million to create a new Canada Water Agency, which will be stood-up in 2022 | Towards the Creation of a Canada Water Agency. CWA Transition Team |
| Canada Water Act | Modernize the 50-year-old <i>Canada Water Act</i> to reflect our new freshwater reality, including addressing climate change, and Indigenous water rights | Advance the modernization of the <i>Canada Water Act</i> | Not Mentioned | Not Confirmed. |
| Freshwater Action Plan | \$1 billion over 10 years | "A historic investment" | \$19.6 million in 2022-23 to Environment and Climate Change Canada to sustain the Freshwater Action Plan | |

REFERENCES FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

1. Water Security for Canadians, [Modernizing Federal Freshwater Leadership](#), May, 2020
2. Water Security for Canadians, [Response to ECCC's Canada Water Agency Discussion Paper](#), March, 2021
3. Forum or Leadership on Water (endorsed by 51 organizations), [Five Foundational Pillars for the Canada Water Agency](#), March, 2021
4. Forum for Leadership on Water, [Federal Freshwater Policy Priorities, Submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development](#), May, 2021
5. Forum for Leadership on Water, [Renewing the Canada Water Act, Submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development](#), May, 2021
6. Forum for Leadership on Water, [Building federal Capacity for Water Leadership, Budget proposal to Prime Minister Trudeau](#), February, 2022
7. Forum for Leadership on Water, [A Strong, Independent Canada Water Agency](#), Submission to ECCC, May, 2022
8. Tom Axworthy, [Failing Grade and Water Worries Continue](#), Published in the Winnipeg Free Press, April 22nd, 2022
9. Oliver Brandes, Merrell-Ann Phare, Richard Farthing-Nichol and J. Michael Miltenberger, "[Fixing Canada's Broken Freshwater Management Regime](#)", Published in The Hill Times, July 5th 2021
10. Water Security for Canadians, [A Water Forum in Recognition of World Water Day](#), Conference in Ottawa featuring 6 Members of Parliament, Scientists and Leaders, March 22nd 2022.