

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau, Acknowledge the Climate Crisis is A Water Crisis



Prime Minister Trudeau and President Nixon signing the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in 1972.

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

From all the members of the [Forum of Leadership on Water](#), and the greater Canadian water community, it is with great disappointment that we write to you following the release of Budget 2022.

Following the release of your mandate letters in December 2021, the Canadian water community felt optimistic about your government's understanding of the significant role that water plays in climate change and your ambition to address this challenge. Your mandate letter to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Honourable Stephen Guilbeault, promised an "[historic investment](#)" for freshwater funding, including the 2022 creation of the Canada Water Agency. Following this, you promised to modernize the Canada Water Act to "[reflect Canada's freshwater reality, including climate change and Indigenous rights](#)".



These promises followed eight years of discussion and over two years of research resulting in the same conclusion outlined in your government's discussion paper, [Toward the Creation of a Canada Water Agency](#): freshwater in Canada is under threat and Canadians want action now. This conclusion united people across the Canadian freshwater sector, with over 50 organizations signing onto the [Five Foundational Pillars for A Canada Water Agency](#) document and coming together to ensure the sustainability of fresh water. Moreover, prior to the budget announcement, Water Security for Canadians hosted a [National Water Forum](#) that featured a speaker from every sitting political party. These Members of Parliament and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Environment and Climate Change echoed that a change in federal freshwater management is critical to immediate climate adaptation in Canada, regardless of party differences.

While Budget 2022 does make strides towards climate adaptation, it misses the crucial discernment that the *climate crisis is a water crisis*. [The budget does not provide adequate resources, urgency, or timelines for freshwater action](#) and therefore loses credibility in the Canadian stance against climate change.

Budget 2022 demonstrates the continued decline in funding and priority your government has given freshwater management. Following the devastating floods and wildfires in British Columbia, which cost Canadians and your government more than \$5 billion and the devastating drought in Manitoba which cost \$93 million to support farmers, Budget 2022 was an opportunity to be proactive in addressing the critical water challenges impacting Canadians. Instead, your government continues to demonstrate a lack of urgency in the threat of this crisis to Canadians.



This table clearly demonstrates the government’s declining interest:

	<u>2021 Liberal Platform</u>	<u>2022 Mandate Letter</u>	<u>2022 Federal Budget</u>
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
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
Freshwater Funding	\$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
Experimental Lakes Funding	\$37.5 million	“Investment”	\$25.0 million over five years

Strong federal leadership is needed to address the serious water challenges people across the country are facing due to climate change and ensure long-term water security for all Canadians. These reforms cannot wait – the urgency of the response must match the urgency of the moment. Science and public opinion are clear: water *must* be a priority as we plan for an uncertain future.



Ignoring water in the fight against climate change undermines any climate change adaptation efforts Canada funds. It is crucial to acknowledge that the climate crisis is a water crisis through adequate funding in modernized freshwater management. The Canadian water community is ready to work with you in making these changes a reality. Now is the time to make water a priority for your government.

On behalf of all FLOW Members –

Thank You,

Emily Lorra Hines, FLOW Coordinator
Oliver Brandes, FLOW Chair

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