

A Board Resolution Submitted by the Anishinabek Nation



CALLING FOR FEDERAL LEGISLATION TO DEFINE DRINKING WATER AND WASTEWATER STANDARDS ON FIRST NATION LANDS

January 2026

WHEREAS First Nations in Canada have expressed concern for lack of federal legislation that clearly defines water, source water, drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on, in and under First Nation land.

AND WHEREAS First Nations have a cultural responsibility to be stewards of water, ensuring that it is safe, clean and accessible for generations to come.

AND WHEREAS First Nations are historically the most impacted by government failures to provide clean drinking water, with many First Nations in Canada under boil water advisories.

AND WHEREAS the creation of federal legislation clearly defining jurisdiction over water services by First Nations would reaffirm the self-governance rights of First Nation peoples recognized in section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

AND WHEREAS the legislation implemented by the Government of Canada should be consistent with the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* to define water, source water, drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on, in and under First Nation lands.

AND WHEREAS the Cities Initiative remains dedicated to First Nation and U.S. Tribal partnership and dialogue through its committee on First Nation and Tribal Engagement.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- The Cities Initiative calls on the Canadian federal government to enact legislation that defines water, source water, drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on, in and under First Nation land, establish enforceable standards to uphold treaty rights of First Nations and guarantee access to clean, safe and affordable water to all Canadian residents. Specifically, such legislation should include:
- Defined terms on protection zones to avoid conflict between federal, provincial and First Nations jurisdictions.
- Sufficient and sustainable funding sources to address water infrastructure needs in First Nations communities.
- A clear definition on the allocation of liability for First Nations if they cannot manage water systems independently.
- The Cities Initiative Committee on First Nation and Tribal Engagement will continue to have dialogue around First Nation self-governance and U.S. Tribal sovereignty and will advocate for their voices to be included in discussions surrounding water protection.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: the Chiefs of Ontario Leadership Council; the Assembly of First Nations; the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador; the Chiefs of the Anishinabek Nation and Canadian Minister of Indigenous Services Mandy Gull-Masty.