



February 4, 2026

The Right Honourable Mark Carney  
Prime Minister of Canada  
229 Wellington St.  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

**Re: Requesting the expedited introduction of First Nations safe drinking water legislation in Parliament**

Dear Prime Minister,

Further to previous discussions, we are writing to express serious concern regarding your government's continued delay in introducing acceptable First Nations safe drinking water legislation in Parliament. While First Nations welcome your commitment to reintroduce this legislation, spring 2026 is not soon enough.

Given the drinking water crises First Nations continue to face across the country, we need the government to act immediately to replace the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act and ensure the speedy passage of a legislative framework to protect First Nations drinking water and the sources upon which those systems depend.

We are also calling on you to commit to retaining and strengthening source water protection in any new legislation, in full partnership with First Nations. Source water protection is the first and most critical measure to address safe drinking water. It is inseparable from the recognition of First Nations inherent jurisdiction, Treaty rights, and responsibilities to care for water.

Failure to recognize First Nation rights in relation to source water protection will undermine First Nations Inherent and Treaty rights and violate your government's international human rights commitments.

Recent and current First Nations water emergencies and resulting evacuations continue to underscore the urgency of addressing long-standing, systemic failures that are – and have been – the responsibility of the government. Sadly, these crises are not isolated incidents; they are the foreseeable outcomes of decades of underinvestment, fragmented governance, and the absence of enforceable protections for watersheds, aquifers, and upstream land uses.

While the legislation has been delayed over the past two years, the Auditor General of Canada has been identifying the critical gaps. The Auditor General's report last year highlighted Canada's

failure to finally eliminate all long-term drinking water advisories, prevent new ones and ensure water systems can provide ongoing access to safe water.

The absence of a federal framework for source water protection continues to leave First Nations vulnerable to contamination, flooding, wildfires, and other cumulative environmental impacts beyond the control of individual communities.

Chiefs across this country have made it clear that Canada must introduce safe drinking water legislation that explicitly addresses source water protection, recognizes First Nation Inherent and Treaty rights, affirms access to clean drinking water as a human right, and reflects the Crown's fiduciary obligations to First Nations.

As we have discussed, the Legislation must also be supported by a First Nations-led national drinking water and wastewater infrastructure needs assessment that will identify the investment required to fully implement the Legislation.

As we highlighted with last year's introduction of Bill C-5, Canada is obligated to secure the free, prior, and informed consent with respect to any new legislation impacting our rights and interests.

This is another reason First Nations are urgently calling for the Act be introduced without any further delay. Essential and adequate resources for consultation and cooperation are required to ensure Rights Holders have an opportunity to thoroughly review, analyze, and provide well informed feedback and participation to the Parliamentary process.

For decades, First Nations have clearly articulated the priorities required for meaningful and lasting solutions. The Auditor General has repeatedly called on Canada to work with First Nations to resolve these issues.

Any new legislation must build on this work. We must not move backwards by weakening protections or sidelining First Nations jurisdiction, particularly with respect to source water.

Meegwetch,



National Chief Cindy Woodhouse-Nepinak  
Assembly of First Nations

Cc: The Honourable Mandy Gull-Masty, Minister of Indigenous Services  
The Honourable Rebecca Alty, Minister of Crown Indigenous Relations