AFN Special Chiefs Assembly
December 9-11, 2008 Ottawa, ON

Resolution no. 50/2008

SUBJECT:	INDIGENOUS COMMISSION ON WATER
MOVED BY:	Bill Erasmus, Proxy, Yellowknives Dene First Nation (Dettah), NWT
SECONDED BY:	Chief Isadore Day, Serpent River First Nation, ON
DECISION:	Carried by Consensus

WHEREAS:

A. The Dene National Environment and Water Summit (the "Summit") provided a forum for delegations of Indigenous Peoples, Leaders, Elders, Traditional Knowledge Keepers, Experts, Participants and Youth to discuss the environment and water related concerns as they relate to First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities across Canada;

B. The purpose of the Summit was to create an opportunity for the development of strategies and policies to prepare for the impacts of climate change, global warming, continuing industrial development, and a multitude of issues and concerns regarding water and wastewater – including but not limited to issues of scarcity, quality, quantity, privatization and valuation, and Indigenous rights, responsibilities and jurisdiction over water and wastewater in their territories;

C. The Peoples gathered at this Summit recognize that the Earth nurtures all forms of life. These forms of life that have been and continue to be created upon the Earth are interconnected and linked so as to make all forms of life "siblings" or family. The special role of human beings upon the Earth is to care for and protect all life forms upon the Earth, in the same compassionate manner that Earth cares for us;

D. Water found all over the Earth represents the sustenance of all life including human beings. The purity and natural flow of this sustenance is necessary for maintaining the interdependent balance between and among all forms of life – which is required for continued survival and livelihood of everything and everyone;

E. The knowledge of the protocols, processes and practices of the relationships between human beings and the forms of life on Earth including water, has been, is and continues to be carried, maintained and expressed by Indigenous Peoples;

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F. The Peoples gathered at this Summit recognize that since the time of contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples, and the advent of the settler society in and on Indigenous lands and territories, this balance has been disrupted, and the role of Indigenous Peoples in the realization of their roles as stewards, caretakers, and protectors has been compromised; and

G. The natural laws governing this traditional and spiritual knowledge cannot be abrogated or derogated by any human being – in spite of the fact that these laws may not have always been followed or acknowledged, they continue to exist and we as human beings have experienced the consequences of their breach.

Therefore be it resolved that:

1. Chiefs-in-Assembly support the establishment of a process and/or institution created by and for Indigenous Peoples to gather information, provide analysis, educate the public and support Indigenous advocacy on issues related to water and wastewater in Canada.

2. This entity be characterized as an Indigenous Commission on Water, whose membership and participation shall be inclusive of all Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

3. Chiefs-in-Assembly encourage all Indigenous leadership to take this Resolution to their respective Nations, Tribes, Communities, organizations, associations or other affiliated entities for support, engagement and coordination.

4. The Assembly of First Nations be directed to start the process for the development of the framework for this Commisison on Water and report on the status at the 2009 Annual General Assembly.

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