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## Assembly of First Nations

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## Assemblée des Premières Nations

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**SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY  
DECEMBER 3 – 5, 2019, OTTAWA, ON**

**Resolution no. 78/2019**

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<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Endorsement of the Preliminary Table of Contents for a First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Water
<b>MOVED BY:</b>	Chief Dan George, Burns Lake Indian Band/Ts'il Kaz Koh, B.C.
<b>SECONDED BY:</b>	Chief R. Donald Maracle, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, ON
<b>DECISION</b>	Carried by Consensus

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**WHEREAS:**

- A. The *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UN Declaration) states:
- i. Article 18: Indigenous Peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions.
  - ii. Article 19: States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous Peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting or implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them.
  - iii. Article 25: Indigenous Peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.
  - iv. Article 32 (2): States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the Indigenous Peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

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**PERRY BELLEGARDE, NATIONAL CHIEF**

**78/2019**  
Page 1 of 3

- B. The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls has identified the First Nations water and housing crisis as a source of violence against First Nations women and girls.
- C. Call for Justice 4.1 identifies the appropriate response to these crises as follows:
  - i. We call upon all governments to uphold the social and economic rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people by ensuring that Indigenous Peoples have services and infrastructure that meet their social and economic needs. All governments must immediately ensure that Indigenous Peoples have access to safe housing, clean drinking water, and adequate food.
- D. The federal government has committed to eliminating all long-term drinking water advisories on public systems on-reserve by March of 2020.
- E. The federal government dedicated in Budget 2016 "... to provide \$1.8 billion over five years to address health and safety needs, to ensure proper facility operation and maintenance, and to end long-term boil water advisories on First Nations reserves within five years."
- F. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) was recently informed that a 'holdback' was put on the last year of federal government delivery costs associated with the resources dedicated in Budget 2016, intended to fund First Nations water and wastewater infrastructure in Budget 2016; and that these monies will only be released when Indigenous Services Canada tables a 'long-term strategy for First Nations water and wastewater' to the federal cabinet in March 2020.
- G. The AFN sought feedback from the Chiefs' Committee on Housing and Infrastructure on a response to the 'holdback' situation and the requirement that Indigenous Services Canada table the 'long-term strategy for First Nations water and wastewater' in March of 2020 to the new federal cabinet.
- H. The AFN utilized the feedback from the Chiefs' Committee on Housing and Infrastructure and commenced a preliminary engagement with First Nations experts on water and wastewater issues across Canada to identify key topics for discussion that could inform the creation of a First Nations Long-Term Strategy for water and wastewater post-2021.
- I. The result of these preliminary meetings was 36 key topics outlined and annotated in a *Preliminary Table of Contents for a First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021*.
- J. There has not be sufficient youth engagement on climate action and water protection, and the creation of a *First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021*.

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**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chiefs-in-Assembly:**

1. Declare that the federal government should proactively inform First Nations of financial matters relevant to the provision of water and wastewater infrastructure.
2. Hereby endorse the *Preliminary Table of Contents for a First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021* as a working document to inform future engagement with First Nations across Canada.
3. Call on the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to urge federal acknowledgment that any long-term strategy for First Nations regarding critical infrastructure must be developed by First Nations themselves in a process that conforms to our own governance processes.
4. Direct the AFN to seek sufficient resources to support engagement with First Nations throughout Canada in 2020 to develop a preliminary First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy.
5. Direct the AFN to seek sufficient resources to support this engagement process with First Nations.
6. Direct the AFN to return to the 2020 AFN Annual General Assembly to present the preliminary First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy to the Chiefs-in-Assembly.
7. Direct the AFN to allocate resources to support the implementation of a National Indigenous Youth Water Collective that would provide funding for capacity-building, training, and projects that strengthen youth leaders to ensure environmental protection for future generations.

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