
Assembly of First Nations

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Assemblée des Premières Nations

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**Special Chiefs Assembly
December 7, 8, 9, 2021, Ottawa (Ontario)**

Resolution no. 28/2021

TITLE: Support for First Nations Decentralized Infrastructure

SUBJECT: Water, Infrastructure, Treaty Rights

MOVED BY: Chief R. Don Maracle, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte, ON

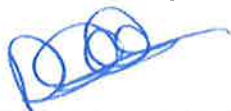
SECONDED BY: Chief Lance Haymond, Kebaowek First Nation, QC

DECISION Carried; 1 objection; 2 abstentions

WHEREAS:

- A. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) states:
- i. 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.
- 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, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA people, responding with Call for Justice 4.1 that states:
- 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.
- C. AFN Resolution 53/2019, *Human Right to Clean Drinking Water*, recognizes and affirms the human right to clean drinking water. The human right to water and sanitation (HRWS) was recognized as a human right by the United Nations General Assembly on July 28, 2010.

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- D. First Nations and all Canadians have the basic human right to clean drinking water. In addition, since the Walkerton Crisis of 2000, provincial governments have made clean drinking water a priority for all municipalities, while the federal government has failed to do the same for First Nations.
- E. Since the current federal government was elected in October 2015, eliminating all First Nation Long-Term Drinking Water Advisories within five years was made a top priority by the Prime Minister in his mandate letters to Cabinet. This commitment, however, only includes funded assets, and not individual systems.
- F. Closing the infrastructure gap by 2030 has been identified as a key commitment of the Federal Government to First Nations.
- G. First Nations across the country continue to face inadequate access to safe, clean water, and adequate infrastructure.
- H. Many First Nations lack sufficient infrastructure; in particular, many First Nations across Canada have decentralized infrastructure systems, such as wells, cisterns and septic tanks that are not covered under the Federal Government's priorities and are not adequately funded.
- I. Samson Cree Nation has, at any given point, over 130 advisories related to its individual water wells. Many residents have been unable to drink their water for many years.

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

1. Direct the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to call on Canada to immediately work in full partnership with First Nations in developing a plan and approach to address all infrastructure gaps by 2030, including decentralized systems, and to establish regional working groups with rights holders on their true infrastructure needs, including decentralized systems.
2. Direct the AFN to call on Canada to resolve all drinking water advisories across First Nations, including individual systems, and to identify funding mechanisms to support First Nations in addressing these needs.
3. Direct the AFN to call on the Minister of Indigenous Services to meet with First Nations, including Samson Cree Nation, to develop a plan to address their ongoing infrastructure issues and persistent water advisories.

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