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A Path Forward – A Long-Term Strategy to Address Water & Wastewater for First Nations

March 2021

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www.afn.ca



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AFN Territorial Acknowledgement

Unceded Algonquin territory,
Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation

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Purpose of Engagement Sessions

- Engage in a discussion covering:
 - Update to the 2019 Long-Term Strategy
 - Discuss an approach going forward
 - Update the AFN Water Declaration

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Resolution 78/2019 Endorsement of the Preliminary Table of Contents for a First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post 2021

- Working document to inform future engagement with First Nations
- Inform federal government that any long term strategy regarding critical infrastructure must be developed by First Nations
- Seek sufficient resources for engagement
- AFN to allocate resources to support a National Indigenous Youth Water Collective

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RECALL: First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021

Background

- AFN informed on November 30, 2018 of requirement that ISC provide a “Long-Term Strategy” to address 2/5 of the holdback on Budget 2016 \$1.8 billion.
- Provided verbal briefing to CCoHI on December 3, 2018.
- Advised by CCoHI to engage in active ‘advocacy’ by AFN to get more info and resist the hard timeline due date to Minister of Finance in March 2020 and create space for First Nations inclusion in process.
- In December 2019 AFN informed that it was only \$15 million (ISC wages)

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RECALL: First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021

Update

- The Preliminary Table of Contents for a First Nations Long-term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021 was compiled from five two-day working meetings held across Canada in October and November 2019 and the AFN National Water Symposium.
- The Preliminary Table of Contents, contains 36 key topics for discussion that can inform the creation of a First Nations Long-Term Strategy.
- Previously a discussion on inclusion of the document to the MC process

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Preliminary Concepts for a First Nations Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021



Community-Driven, First Nations-Centered

- Integration of Traditional & Cultural Knowledge & Governance Systems
- Do Not Replicate 'Indian Affairs' Approach
- Regional Considerations
- Role of Women as Stewards of Water
- Remember the 'Forgotten'
- Holistic & Circular
- Removing Problematic Stereotypes & Misinformation
- Addressing Predatory Processes and Entities
- Role of Youth as Future Leaders



Emerging Threats

- Source Water Protection
- Water Security
- Climate Change
- Addressing Emerging Issues
- Emergency Preparedness & Training



Closing the Gap

- Establish Baseline Data & Information on Critical Infrastructure in First Nations
- Funding & Resources
- Acknowledging & Ending 'Divide and Conquer' Strategies
- Jurisdictional Considerations
- Address Chronic Under-Funding of First Nations Critical Infrastructure
- Governance
- Address Existing Problems
- Training
- Wastewater



Innovative Solutions

- Research & Innovation
- Engaging Automation & Technological Evolution for Efficiency
- Pilot Projects



Leveraging Partnerships & Building Relationships

- Supporting First Nations Water & Wastewater Operators
- Enhancing the Role of First Nations Organizations in Water & Wastewater
- Political Relationships & Alliances
- Leveraging the work of First Nations Allies



Establishing Long-Term Sustainability

- Support for Existing Initiatives
- Creation/Support for Current New Initiatives
- Create a Structural Implementation Mechanism
- Addressing Co-Management/Third-Party Management
- Oversight, Monitoring and Compliance
- Succession Planning & Transitional Support



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Update on the Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021

- ISC Presented AFN with a Draft Long-Term Drinking Water Strategy on February 17, 2020, which was rejected by the AFN.
- Beginning in March 2020, ISC and AFN engaged in open discussions about rethinking the approach, and about how to ensure First Nations led the development of any and all ‘Strategies’”

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Update on the Long-Term Water and Wastewater Strategy Post-2021

- The government has committed to closing the infrastructure gap by 2030, but how?
- Given that regions are proceeding with developing their own authorities – how best can we proceed to support this work, and ensure fairness across all First Nations?

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In our 2020 Pre-Engagements, we heard of the issues you are facing

- Ending Long-Term DWAs on First Nations
- What is this new Canada Water Agency
- ISC O&M W/WW Funding Issues
- Impacts of COVID-19
- Funding, funding, funding
- Source Water Protection

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Today's Engagement

- How relevant are the concepts from the 2019 Engagements?
- How best can we develop a Strategy?
- Should it even be called a Strategy?
- What role do First Nations organizations and leadership play?
- What about updating the Water Declaration?

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Discussion/Breakout #1

What a Long Term
Vision/Strategy needs to
include....

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Theme 1 - Community-Driven, First Nations-Centered

1. Integration of Traditional & Cultural Knowledge & Governance Systems
2. Do Not Replicate 'Indian Affairs' Approach
3. Regional Considerations
4. Role of Women as Stewards of Water
5. Remember the 'Forgotten'
6. Holistic & Circular
7. Removing Problematic Stereotypes and Misinformation
8. Addressing predatory processes and entities
9. Role of Youth as Future Leaders

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Theme 2 - Closing the Gap

1. Establish baseline data & information on critical infrastructure in First Nations
2. Funding and Resources
3. Acknowledging & Ending 'Divide and Conquer' Strategies
4. Jurisdictional Considerations
5. Address Chronic Under-Funding of First Nations Critical Infrastructure
6. Governance
7. Address Existing Problems
8. Training
9. Wastewater

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Theme 3 - Leveraging Partnerships & Building Relationships

1. Supporting First Nations Water Operators
2. Enhancing the Role of First Nations Organizations Involved in Water & Wastewater
3. Political Relationships & Alliances
4. Leveraging the work of First Nations Allies

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Theme 4 - Emerging Threats

1. Source Water Protection
2. Water Security
3. Climate Change
4. Addressing Emerging Issues
5. Emergency Preparedness and Training

Theme 5 - Innovative Solutions

1. Research & Innovation
2. Engaging Automation & Technological Evolution for Efficiency
3. Pilot Projects

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Theme 6 - Establishing Long-Term Sustainability

1. Support for Existing Initiatives
2. Creation/Support for Current New Initiatives
3. Create a Structural Implementation Mechanism
4. Addressing Co-Management/Third-Party Management
5. Oversight, Monitoring and Compliance
6. Succession Planning and Transitional Support

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Discussion/Breakout #2

How do we get to a Strategy?

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Questions to consider, food for thought...

- Do we strike a Joint Committee? Do we establish Regional Tables?
- Do we bring forward a revised Strategy with the concepts and your feedback to the Chiefs-in-Assembly?

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Questions to consider, food for thought...

- Do we need high-level leadership support and buy-in?
- How does this work support the creation of regional entities and authorities?

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Discussion Topic for Breakout #3

AFN Water Declaration

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AFN Water Declaration

- Given the changes, and evolutions, and the UN Declaration – the AFN Water Declaration is now out-of-date

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AFN Water Declaration

- **Currently contains:**
 - Context
 - Ceremony – importance of water
 - Inherent & Treaty Rights
 - Current Condition and Protection of Waters
 - Consultation & Accommodation

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AFN Water Declaration

- Currently contains:
 - Water Governance
 - Indigenous Knowledge Systems
 - Final Affirmation
 - Non-Derogation clause

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AFN Water Declaration

- What is missing? What needs to be added? How relevant is a Declaration?

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Thank you!

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Extra Slides

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Issues with Previous ISC Strategy

- General Comments:
 - It was unclear how the Strategy would be utilized throughout the MC process
 - While the draft Strategy comments on a First Nations-led approach, there is no articulation of this throughout
 - There is no alignment with AFN's 36 key concepts
 - Vague, incorrect and ambiguous wording that paints an incorrect and incomplete picture
 - A Government-lens discussion of First Nations context
 - Faulty focus on Service Delivery
 - Lack of meaningful, actionable objectives
 - Incomplete discussion on governance and customary and Indigenous legal frameworks

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