

# WATER INSECURITY IN CANADIAN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

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Source: CBC News 2017

## Responsibility for Safe Water in Indigenous Communities

- Federal government (INAC & Health Canada)
- Indigenous communities

## Present Situation: Canadian Indigenous Communities

As of 30th June, 2017, 132 drinking water advisories in 87 First Nations

- 99 long term drinking water advisories
- 33 short term drinking water advisories

(Health Canada, 2017)

## Policy Responses

- The First Nation Water Management Strategy (FNWMS)
- First Nations Water and Wastewater Action Plan (FNWWAP)
- National Assessment of First Nations Water and Wastewater Systems
- Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act
- The Trudeau Promise

## OUTCOMES

- Precarious and gloomy water situation
- Situation in Indigenous community remains unchanged despite substantial investments.
- Examination of other avenues on how to change the status quo is needed.

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## Introduction

- Lack of access to safe, clean, drinking water in Canada, particularly, in many Indigenous communities (Baird & Plummer, 2013; Spence & Walters, 2012).
- Disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.
- Rooted in the colonial relationship between Canada and Indigenous people.

### Objectives:

- To understand the nature of water insecurity experienced by Indigenous communities across Canada.
- To understand the present water situation in Indigenous communities across Canada.
- To understand the challenges to water security in Indigenous communities across Canada.
- To understand the policy responses to water insecurity in Indigenous communities.

## Challenges to Water Security in Indigenous Communities

- Lack of funding
- Lack of trained water operators
- Lack infrastructural setbacks (e.g. equipment malfunction)
- Jurisdictional overlap
- Climate (e.g. summer temperatures, high level of turbidity)
- Gaps in legislation

(Auditor General, 2005; Boyd, 2011; Galway, 2016; Hanrahan, 2017; McGregor, 2012; Hanrahan et al., 2014).

## Consequences for Indigenous Communities

- Physical, health & mental hazards (gastro-intestinal infections, giardia infections, influenza, whooping cough (pertussis), shigellosis, impetigo and aggravated obsessive compulsive orders).
- Desecration of the spiritual and cultural connection of Indigenous people to water.

(Lam et al., 2017; Boyd, 2011; McGregor, Hanrahan et al., 2014 2012; Chief et al., 2016)