



Chiefs of Ontario

Chiefs of Ontario supports all First Nations in Ontario as they assert their sovereignty, jurisdiction, and their chosen expression of nationhood.

Keeping in mind the wisdom of our Elders, and the future for our youth, we continue to create the path forward in building our Nations as strong, healthy Peoples respectful of ourselves, each other, and all of creation.





Water



OVERVIEW

- What is the Canada Water Agency
- What is the Scope of the Agency
- How might this impact First Nations
- How are First Nations being consulted and/or involved
- Pre-Engagement & Information Sharing
- Proposal Development for Pre-Engagement
- Round Table with ECCC – August 12, 2021



Canada Water Agency: What is it?

- Canada Water Agency is a proposal from Environment and Climate Change Canada, with support from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, intended to improve freshwater management practices and coordination across Canada.
- Budget 2021 proposes to provide **\$17.4 million over two years** starting in 2021-22 to Environment and Climate Change Canada.
- There is no specific indication as yet for how the Water Agency will be structured or what exactly it will do.
- The federal government is currently in the process of soliciting feedback on objectives and issues to be considered in the potential establishment of the agency.

Canada Water Agency: What is the Scope?

- The Scope of the Agency is potentially very large, as it could include watershed management, research, freshwater data, infrastructure, restoration and protection, as well as any other aspect that is relevant to the management of freshwater in Canada.
- The proposal for the Canada Water Agency advocates for a whole of government approach given the number of departments and activities that affect freshwater management.

Canada Water Agency: How might this Impact First Nations?

- The activities potentially covered by the proposed Canada Water Agency will undoubtedly impact the inherent and treaty rights of First Nations.
- The federal government, in its proposal, claims that they intend the Agency to advance reconciliation and have an increased role for Indigenous peoples in the management of freshwater as an objective. They note that the inclusion of Indigenous governance systems in water management will be part of the dialogue with First Nations going forward.

Canada Water Agency – continued-

- The proposal also flags the "co-development and delivery of science programs and strategies with Indigenous peoples to ensure the braiding of Western and Indigenous knowledge."
- There will need to be significant investment from the federal government to support First Nations' capacity and engagement on these issues in a way that respects First Nations' rights and jurisdiction

Canada Water Agency: Consultation

- Although the period for public consultation closed on March 1, 2021, there are dedicated Indigenous engagements that will continue through 2021.
- Environment and Climate Change Canada noted that the scope of Indigenous engagement would not be limited to the Discussion Paper they produced in the fall of 2020. It is prioritizing funding to support nation-to-nation and government-to-government partnerships in the engagement process.

Pre-Engagement

- Due to the size and scope of the CWA, COO developed a proposal for pre-engagement and information sharing
- Proposal Objectives:
 - A. Ensure First Nations are prepared to make informed decisions related to the establishment of the CWA
 - B. Develop a process to ensure First Nations are treated as equal partners throughout the configuration of the CWA
 - C. Establish ongoing working relationships ECCE and other partners working to establish the CWA
 - D. Ensure alignment and continuity of work by coordinating meetings with the Chiefs Committee on Environment and regular updates to Leadership Council

Proposal Development: Pre-Engagement

- Project Summary:
- The purpose of this project will be to ensure that First Nations in Ontario are prepared to make informed decisions on issues related to the CWA. This project will begin with a two-day information session to provide background on the CWA and seek feedback and recommendations on establishing the CWA.
- Following the initial two-day meeting, a series of workshops will be hosted to ensure First Nations are informed on key issues related to the CWA
- Develop a final report with findings

Thank you

