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Safe Drinking Water Foundation  
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To the Advanced Aboriginal Water Treatment Team:

**RE: Position Paper on Federal Engagement Sessions for First Nations Drinking Water**

Thank you for sharing with us the Safe Drinking Water Foundation's (SDWF) Position Paper on the Federal Engagement Sessions for First Nations Drinking Water, dated April 2009. The David Suzuki Foundation appreciates SDWF's vigilance, advocacy, and expertise related to drinking water issues in First Nations communities.

As you know, the David Suzuki Foundation examined drinking water quality issues in our 2006 report, *The Water We Drink: An International Comparison of Drinking Water Quality Standards and Guidelines*. We found gaps in Canada's drinking water quality assurance system and highlighted in particular the systemic failure to provide safe drinking water on First Nations reserves. The report recommended that Canada develop and implement legally-binding national standards for drinking water quality that are on par with the strongest standards already in place in other countries, and take urgent steps to provide for clean drinking water in Aboriginal communities.

On this basis, the David Suzuki Foundation has supported federal funding of the Plan of Action for Drinking Water in First Nations Communities. We are therefore very concerned to learn about SDWF's experience at the recent "engagement sessions." We agree with SDWF's call for federal accountability to ensure that drinking water systems in First Nations communities are capable of meeting, at a minimum, all 56 health parameters of the Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines.

We hope that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Health Canada will respond favourably to the issues raised in the SDWF position paper. Please continue to keep us informed of new developments.

Sincerely,

Jay Ritchlin  
Director, Marine and Freshwater Conservation Program  
David Suzuki Foundation