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Dear Sir/Madam,

We were very pleased to receive so many letters of response from our earlier mailings this year, and happy to know you are reading our communication. Of particular interest was the one and only politician who had actually done something with regard to protecting the health of Canadians with safe drinking water. Bill Blaikie MP Elmwood-Transcona in Winnipeg MB, explained he has "*stood in the House of Commons and spoken on water pollution, water conservation and water exports more than fifty times going back over twenty years*" And what is more in 1986 he "moved a private members bill on drinking water, C-276, The Canada Safe Drinking Water Act, designed to protect and enhance drinking water quality in Canada". Well done Bill! But what a sad state that this is the only positive action provided to us! To the best of our knowledge this bill has not passed, why not? What do we have to do to pass this and other much needed legislation? What are you doing in this regard?

When the Safe Drinking Water Foundation was founded in 1997 we thought that Politicians were unaware of the facts surrounding unsafe drinking water in Canada, or unaware of their responsibility and liability to protect public health. For the past ten years we have often sent information and tried to educate federal, provincial and municipal levels of government on issues surrounding safe drinking water. While they have read and acknowledged receipt of this information, often wishing SDWF continued success, and requesting they be kept informed, the level of action to ensure that drinking water is safe has been minimal even after Walkerton and North Battleford. Therefore we assume politicians just don't know what they should do.

There are five critical points which we believe politicians should grasp and implement immediately:

1. Safe Drinking Water is a basic human right - despite the fact that Canada remains the only developed country to vote NO at the United Nations on this fact.
2. Canada needs National Drinking Water Regulations, and they should be equal or better than the U.S. and European drinking water regulations.

3. That Health Canada should complete regular and thorough testing of all drinking water, not just for coliforms, chlorine and nitrates, but for all of the 56 parameters which make up the Canadian drinking water guidelines. Rural water treatment plants both in native and non-native communities frequently have to treat water sources that contain both chemicals and microbes in elevated concentrations. The water treatment processes used to deal with these water sources are often not capable of dealing with the contaminants and while limited water quality testing may indicate the water is safe, more extensive tests will reveal that Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines cannot be met. The gap between "perceived" and "actual" safe drinking water needs to be met by robust water treatment technologies, which will be required by rural water treatment plants if truly safe drinking water is ever going to be achieved in these communities.

4. That Stats Canada should track:

- ▶ Issues of concern to aboriginal people in their surveys, and this definitely includes water!
- ▶ Boil Water Advisories (present and historic)
- ▶ Keep statistics for illnesses that are reportable and can be caused by water. Waterborne illnesses in developing countries represent around 80% of all disease causing productivity losses of more than 30%. Health Canada's looking the other way attitude must be replaced by honest attempts to correct the water quality situation in aboriginal communities across Canada. If we have no problems Health Canada should be able to claim that aboriginal communities across the country are not affected by waterborne diseases using reportable illness information bearing in mind that for some pathogens, such as *Cryptosporidium*, the under-reporting is causing the case load to be 10-100 times too low.

5. That INAC/Health Canada should test all raw and treated waters of all First Nation water treatment plants to ensure they are effective, and maintain a "hold back" to ensure they continue to be effective six months after construction, before contracts are paid to engineering companies.

In Mr. Prentice's reply of April 24th he was proud to state:

- ▶ "In March 193 high risk water systems were identified and that number is now reduced to 97"
- ▶ "In March 2006, 21 communities were identified as priorities, 7 of these have been removed from that category"
- ▶ "The Protocol for safe drinking water in First Nation Communities was issued and put into effect"
- ▶ "875 water and waste water operators have received ongoing training through the Circuit Rider Training Program"
- ▶ "An Expert Panel has provided a report on options for a regulatory regime"

We see a few problems with these numbers.

▶ If appropriate testing was done to truly determine if water is safe then we together with an organization representing more than 50,000 engineers deem that it is likely that >90% of aboriginal water treatment plants will not be able to meet the Canadian Drinking Water Quality Guidelines, and as these guidelines are bound to become more stringent similar to US and European regulations the numbers will not get better

▶ INAC's and Health Canada's major weapon against Boil Water Advisories, add more chlorine and test for coliforms. They know that only one third of waterborne disease outbreaks have positive coliforms associated with them, yet insist that this is a way to tell if the water is safe or not.

▶ The problem with Health Canada as well as federal "arms-length" training agencies, tribal councils etc. is that they are given marching orders based on flawed premises, no matter how much these agencies try to convince themselves that Chlorine is King, the science for the past 20 years has generated thousands of scientific papers that this is not true; we suspect that Health Canada's policy of not using scientists to comment on any of these issues is that none of them would!

Each Political party has been invited to post their party platform on drinking water on our newly revamped website, www.safewater.org, to-date only the Green Party has responded!

Members of our Advanced Aboriginal Water Treatment Team will be in Toronto June 23 to 29th, they would be happy to make appointments to meet with you on the 29th if you are interested in learning about real water issues from those who are diligently working to correct them.

I am enclosing a brochure of our upcoming conference "Water Quality Solutions", I hope you will prove to Canadians that you are part of the solution by attending this event. Also attached is our newsletter, which maybe reaffirms your need to learn a whole lot more about drinking water.

Sincerely,



Dr. Hans Peterson
Voluntary Executive Director