

# SDWF

Safe Drinking  
Water Foundation

11 Innovation Blvd.  
Saskatoon, SK  
S7N 3H5  
www.safewater.org

Ph.: (306) 934-0389

Fax: (306) 975-5143

Email:

info@safewater.org

Charity Registration #

86838 4892 RR0001

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Merge to all MP's

As we begin a new year we wish there were also new realities for rural and native people across Canada when it comes to drinking water. This year I intend to write to you monthly to keep you informed of our activities, and to focus each month on one of our programs, rather than to overload you with information on a less frequent basis. If you would like to be removed from this distribution please just let me know.

The federal government shrewdly released their report from the so-called Expert Panel on Drinking Water for First Nations just as the Christmas holidays occupied most peoples' time, probably in the hopes it would slip by with little media attention. It is the opinion of the Safe Drinking Water Foundation that this report was inaccurately titled, it should have been the "Political Panel on Drinking Water for First Nations". The report does not accurately address the issues presented to the panel at the respective provincial hearings, instead it has chosen to selectively promote ineffective government programs. It is one more case of government allocating funds in the name of Canada's aboriginal people when in fact virtually none of the funds trickle down to improve quality of life for our aboriginal people!

Harry Swain who chaired the panel received \$254,000 for his contribution over this past summer. Steve Hruddy received \$120,000 and Chief Stan Louttit received \$120,000. To quote Al Gore from his movie *The Inconvenient Truth*, "***It is hard to convince a man to understand when he is paid a salary not to understand!***" The Safe Drinking Water Foundation (SDWF) has its own Expert Panel, the Aboriginal Advanced Water Treatment Team, (AAWTT) and they volunteer their time! They made presentations on behalf of many first nation communities to the hearings in Alberta and Saskatchewan and were present at the Manitoba hearings. What was presented on the prairies was excluded from the final report.

Now everyone knows that government should be held accountable and responsible for every Canadian to have access to safe drinking water – although Canada continues to be the only developed country to vote "No" at United Nations Human Rights Commission, that drinking water is not a human right! The question is how and who is holding the government responsible and accountable?

It seems appropriate that this month I tell you a little more about two projects we have initiated to focus on the reality of this situation. First

we have trained members of SDWF's Aboriginal Advanced Water Treatment Team to teach other Water Keepers, to visit communities and share their knowledge on how to assess the challenges, and what solutions are appropriate. We have also partnered with the Ontario Society of Engineers to create a position of Ombudsman, to oversee the water project teams on First Nations and ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the citizens of each community. That First Nation leadership, both INAC and Health Canada representatives, and Engineers all act in a highly professional and ethical manner. I am enclosing two summary sheets outlining these projects.

I hope you will find this information interesting and that you too will want to become part of the solution for safe drinking water here in Canada by supporting the Safe Drinking Water Foundation with a donation. I am happy to provide any further information requested.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Peterson', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sue Peterson  
Volunteer Administrator

P.S.

We are using up old letterhead, our new address is: Safe Drinking Water Foundation 912 Idylwyld Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7L 0Z6. Our phone # remains 306-934-0389 and our fax # has changed to 306-934-5289