



**Reverend Peter Bush**  
**Moderator**  
**143 General Assembly**  
**The Presbyterian Church of Canada**  
**50 Wynford Drive**  
**Toronto, ON**  
**M3C 1J7**

Dear Reverend Bush:

This is in response to your letter of August 3, 2017, addressed to the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, regarding progress made to end long term drinking water advisories on First Nation Communities. Thank you for taking the time to write.

I appreciate and share your concerns. Let me address your question regarding the current progress to date on this very important issue.

As you know, Budget 2016 provided \$1.8 billion over five years to significantly improve on-reserve water and wastewater infrastructure, ensure proper facility operation, maintenance, and training for water system operators. This is in addition to \$141.7 million over five years to improve drinking water monitoring and testing on reserve.

In 2016-2017, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) invested \$274.6 million in targeted funding to support water and wastewater initiatives, including 241 water and wastewater projects. Of that total, 30 projects are aimed at addressing 52 long-term drinking water advisories (DWAs) in 30 First Nations communities. This amounts to more than 75% of existing long-term drinking water advisories affecting public systems financially supported by the Department.

As of June 2017, 26 long-term drinking water advisories affecting public water systems financially supported by INAC were lifted through the work done in partnership with First Nation communities and partners. Furthermore, the Department has developed an action plan to address all 69 current long-term drinking water advisories (as of June 30, 2017) affecting the public systems it supports.

The Government of Canada is moving forward with a long-term strategy to address water and wastewater infrastructure issues in First Nation communities. As part of this long-term strategy, the Government is streamlining funding processes and working closely with First Nations to prioritize investments in infrastructure and capacity building to address water issues on reserves. Projects and initiatives for 2017-18 through to



2020-21 are being prioritized to achieve the elimination by 2021 of all long-term drinking water advisories affecting public systems financially supported by the Department.

Results of the Government's long-term strategy will become more evident as projects advance and additional years' investments are made.

I encourage you to refer to the supporting documents available on the Government of Canada website for more information on progress to date.

- **Improving Water and Wastewater Infrastructure in First Nation Communities**

([https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-northern-affairs/news/2017/03/improving\\_water\\_andwastewaterinfrastructureinfirstnationcommunit.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-northern-affairs/news/2017/03/improving_water_andwastewaterinfrastructureinfirstnationcommunit.html))

- **Progress towards eliminating long-term drinking water advisories in First Nation communities**

(<http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1488477520261/1488477554976>)

Thank you for taking the time to write and share your views on these important issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'DCL', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Daniel Leclair  
Director General  
Regional Infrastructure Delivery Branch  
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada