



1:00pm – 4:30pm

# Brainstorming for Canada's national water vision

*Symposium Organizers: Pacific Water Research  
Centre and Ryerson Urban Water*

# Brainstorming for Canada's National Water Vision:

## Overview of State of Play in Canada



Courtney Bridge & Zafar Adeel  
Pacific Water Research Centre  
Simon Fraser University

# History of National Water Policies

- ▶ Canada Water Act 1970
  - ▶ Collaboration between governments
  - ▶ Encourage novel ideas
  - ▶ Introduced polluter fees
  - ▶ Promoted the development of water programs, advisory boards and committees
- ▶ Federal Water Policy 1987
  - ▶ Protect and enhance the quality of water resources
  - ▶ Promote wise and efficient use of water resources
  - ▶ 5 strategies

# Current Federal Water Management

- ▶ Canadian Environment Protection Act
- ▶ Boundary Waters Treaty Act
- ▶ Fisheries Act
- ▶ Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality
- ▶ Management of Municipal Wastewater Effluent

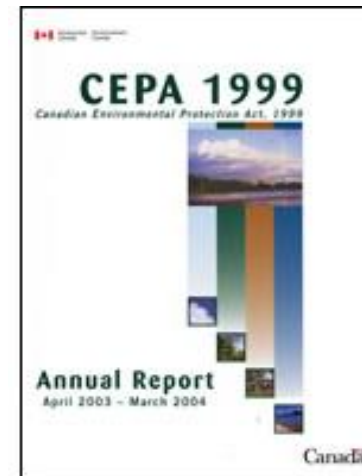


Guidelines for  
Canadian Drinking  
Water Quality

Sixth Edition



Canada

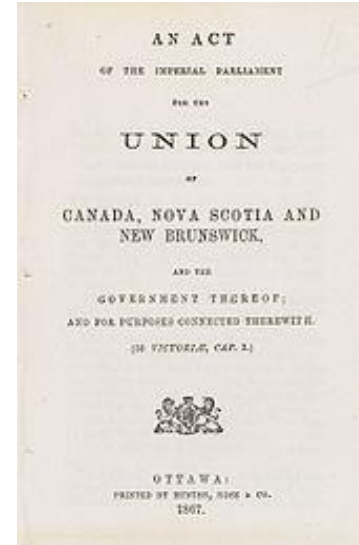


# Provincial and Territorial Water Policy

Province/Territory	Main Water Strategy
British Columbia	Water Sustainability Act
Alberta	Water Act
Saskatchewan	Water Security Agency Act
Manitoba	Water Rights Act
Ontario	Water Resources Act
Quebec	Environment Quality Act
New Brunswick	Clean Environment Act
Nova Scotia	Environment Act
Prince Edward Island	Environment Protection Act
Newfoundland and Labrador	Water Resources Act
Yukon	Water Act
Northwest Territories	Water Act
Nunavut	Nunavut Water and Nunavut Surface Rights Tribunal

# Fragmentation

- ▶ Natural resource rights
- ▶ 20 Departments responsible for freshwater



# Missing Data and Monitoring

- ▶ No federal agency dedicated to water
- ▶ No standards or guidelines for monitoring
- ▶ No central database for freshwater data
- ▶ Over 10 million people in Canada get their drinking water from groundwater, yet groundwater reserves are not completely mapped

# Consequences

## DRINKING WATER ADVISORY



**The Vancouver Island Health Authority recommends that all water in the Village of Alert Bay be boiled for one minute, or otherwise disinfected, before drinking.**



For further information, contact the local Health Protection office:  
250-902-6091





# Gaps in Our Understanding

- ▶ Where lies the greatest potential for Canada to effectively respond to its national water challenges? What are Canada's strengths?
- ▶ What has been the key turning point in Canada's engagement of indigenous people in addressing its water challenges?
- ▶ Can Canada learn from other developed countries in formulation of its national water policy, such that it supports implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals?
- ▶ Which players on the Canadian national scene have been most effective in engaging the public on water challenges? Why?

# Considerations for a National Water Vision

- ▶ Intersection of water and human rights
- ▶ Sharing water across borders
- ▶ Major drivers of water insecurity
  - ▶ Climate change
  - ▶ Population growth

# SDGs and the Water Decade

- ▶ 17 SDGs outlined in the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development
  - ▶ 14 of these SDGs can be directly connected to water
- ▶ 2018-2028 International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development



It's time to "warrior up," stop polluting the planet and give water the same rights and protections as human beings.



**WATER**  
**ACTION DECADE**  
— 2018-2028 —

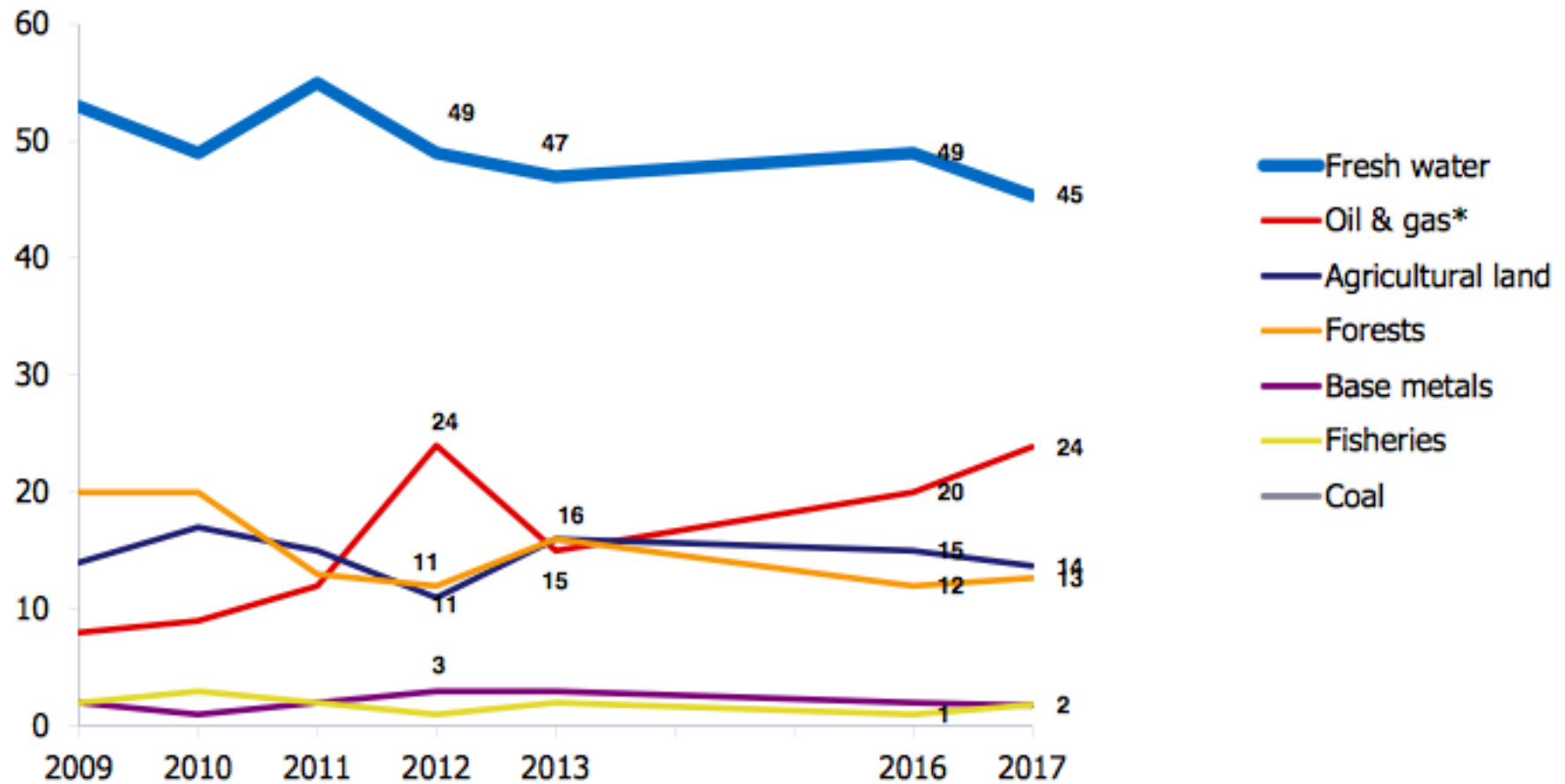
*Autumn Peltier: 13-year old Anishinaabe girl from Wikwemikong First Nation*

# Stumbling Blocks

- ▶ Federalist approach
- ▶ Varying approaches to water management
- ▶ Varying water uses
- ▶ Absence of federal water department
- ▶ No enforceable standards
- ▶ Political will
- ▶ Short political cycle
- ▶ General public is uneducated and disconnected

# Public perception

## Canada's Most Important Natural Resource, 2009–2017



# Key Questions that Remain

## *How to Achieve a National Water Vision?*

- ▶ How best can we engage the Canadian public such that everyone is excited about a national water vision?
- ▶ What are the essential and critical ingredients of a national water vision?
- ▶ What are the best steps for creating a national dialogue so that everyone's perspectives and views are accounted for and addressed? Who should lead the way?
- ▶ How might we best engage with folks who are skeptical about the notion of a common Canadian “song-book” on water?



# IWDA | International Water Decade Alliance

WATER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (2018-2028)