

December 19, 2025

Hon. Mandy Gull-Masty  
Minister of Indigenous Services Canada  
mandy.gull-masty@sac-isc.gc.ca

Dear Minister Gull-Masty,

We write to express our concern that the Federal government has not moved forward with the long-promised Bill C-61, the First Nations Clean Water Act. Introduced at the end of 2023, the legislation would have set minimum standards for drinking water on reserves, acknowledged First Nations' inherent jurisdiction over water on their lands and recognized safe drinking water as a human right.

While the government of Canada regularly renews its commitment to the lifting of all long-term drinking water advisories, action has been slow. We note that the Chiefs of Ontario (COO), a group representing the leaders of 133 [First Nations](#) in the province, passed a resolution calling on the government to retable Bill C-61 immediately. The Siksika Nation in Alberta has accused Ottawa of violating its legal commitment to pass new legislation to ensure sustainable First Nation water and wastewater systems by December 31, 2022.

We note that the recent federal budget included funding of \$777 million for continuing improvement of clean water systems. But Indigenous leaders have voiced disappointment, stating that the budget does not significantly change the existing approach to water management. The promise to re-introduce the First Nations Clean Water Act before the end of the 2025 House of Commons session has now been postponed again. We fear the costs of inaction will only increase, leaving scars deeper than illness. It's the trauma of Indigenous people knowing their family's health is negotiable.

We encourage you to move with urgency to introduce new legislation to ensure sustainable First Nation water and wastewater systems, with minimum standards of water quality and minimum capacity standards for the delivery of water. Let us remedy overdue justice by creating a transparent approach to building, improving, and providing drinking water and wastewater services for First Nations, with adequate and sustainable funding, and most importantly, support for the voluntary assumption of water and wastewater infrastructure by First Nations Canada.

Established in June 2021, the **Office of Religious Congregations for Integral Ecology** ([www.ORCIE.org](http://www.ORCIE.org)) has enhanced the capacity of over two dozen Catholic religious congregations to collaboratively increase their impact on policy change towards social and ecological justice. We consider the provision of safe drinking water on First Nations' territories an urgent element of Canada's necessary work towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

We respectfully ask you to reintroduce new legislation in early 2026 and strengthen actions to eliminate all boil water advisories in First Nations communities.

Yours sincerely,

Joe Gunn  
ORCIE co-Chair