Blue Communities – sample resolutions for municipalities

**Sample resolution – Recognize the rights to water and sanitation**

WHEREAS nearly 750 million people around the world do not have access to clean drinking water, 4 billion people face severe water scarcity and 2.5 billion people do not have adequate sanitation; and

WHEREAS Indigenous communities in Canada have been disproportionately affected by lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation; and

WHEREAS on July 28, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution recognizing the human rights to water and sanitation; and

WHEREAS on September 23, 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council passed a resolution on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and called on governments to take concrete action by developing plans of action, establishing monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and ensuring affordable services for everyone; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Council of Canadians have asked Canadian municipalities to assist in their effort to have the federal government protect water and sanitation as human rights; and

WHEREAS recognizing the rights to water and sanitation is one of three steps needed to declare [name of municipality] a Blue Community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that [*name of municipality]* recognizes and affirms that water and sanitation services are fundamental human rights.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [*name of municipality]* will call on the federal and provincial governments to enshrine the human rights to water and sanitation in federal and provincial law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that [*name of municipality]* will call on the Government of Canada to develop a national plan of action to implement the human rights to water and sanitation.

**Sample resolution – Banning or phasing out the sale of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events**

WHEREAS *[name of municipality*] operates and maintains a regulated and sophisticated water treatment and distribution system that meets some of the most stringent water quality requirements in the world; and

WHEREAS the regulatory requirements for monitoring water quality contained in single-use bottled water are not as stringent as those that must be met by *[name of municipality or community]*; and

WHEREAS single-use bottled water is up to 3,000 times more expensive than water from the tap in *[name of municipality]*, even though bottled water can originate from municipal water systems;

WHEREAS resource extraction, packaging and distribution of single-use bottled water creates unnecessary air quality and climate change impacts, consumes unnecessary resources such as oil in the manufacturing of plastic bottles and fuel used in the transportation of bottled water to the consumer, and creates unnecessary recycling and waste disposal costs; and

WHEREAS *[name of municipality]*’s tap water is safe, healthy and accessible to residents and visitors, is readily available at most indoor public facilities, and is substantially more sustainable than bottled water; and

WHEREAS when access to municipal tap water does not exist, bottled water can be an appropriate alternative; and

WHEREAS banning the sale and provision of bottled water in municipal facilities and at municipal events is one of three steps needed to declare [name of municipality] a Blue Community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, where access to municipal tap water exists, single-use bottled water will no longer be sold in municipal facilities, from municipally-owned or municipally administered concessions, or from vending machines in public facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT single-use bottled water will no longer be purchased and provided at municipal meetings, events or work performed outdoors where access to municipal water exists; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the availability of water jugs with municipal water will be increased at municipally-organized meetings and events; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a staff and public awareness campaign be developed to support the rationale for these changes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT staff develop an implementation schedule with timelines that includes an assessment of access to tap water at municipal facilities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT staff provide a progress report at regular intervals.

**Sample resolution – Promoting publicly financed, owned, and operated water and wastewater services**

WHEREAS public health depends on equitable access to drinking water and sanitation systems; and

WHEREAS public ownership and operation of drinking water and wastewater treatment systems have been fundamental to access and quality over the past century; and

WHEREAS *[name of municipality]* is committed to protecting water and wastewater systems from the consequences of privatization through “public-private partnerships”, or P3s, including:

* lack of transparency and public accountability;
* increased costs;
* higher user fees;
* multi-decade contracts that limit the policy options of future local governments; and
* international trade deals providing private water companies with rights to sue municipalities who bring water services into public hands; and

WHEREAS the privatization of municipal water and wastewater treatment systems and services through P3s or contracting out turns water into a commodity to be sold for profit; and

WHEREAS the federal government is requiring much-needed improvements to wastewater standards – a situation that could open the door to privatization unless dedicated public infrastructure funding is provided to upgrade treatment facilities; and

WHEREAS keeping water and wastewater infrastructure public is one of three steps needed to declare [name of municipality] a Blue Community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that *[name of municipality]* oppose privatization in any form of water and wastewater treatment infrastructure and services, including through P3s or short-term service contracts, and resolve to keep these services publicly financed, owned, operated and managed; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that *[name of municipality]* lobby the federal government to fulfill its responsibility to support municipal infrastructure by investing in a national water and wastewater infrastructure fund that would address the growing need to renew existing water and wastewater infrastructure and build new systems, and that would only fund public projects; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that *[name of municipality]* forward this resolution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for circulation to its members.

**Sample resolution – Blue Indigenous Community**

WHEREAS nearly 750 million people around the world do not have access to clean drinking water, 4 billion people face severe water scarcity and 2.5 billion people do not have adequate sanitation; and

WHEREAS Indigenous communities – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – in Canada have been disproportionately affected by lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation services; and

WHEREAS the 2011 National Engineering Assessment, a study commissioned by the Canadian government on the condition of First Nations water and wastewater systems, found that 73 per cent of water systems were at medium to high risk; and

WHEREAS there are routinely more than 100 water advisories in effect in Indigenous communities in Canada where people cannot drink straight from the tap, with half of the communities living under advisories for over five years and a number of communities living under advisories for more than ten years; and

WHEREAS on July 28, 2010, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution recognizing the human rights to water and sanitation; and

WHEREAS on September 23, 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council passed a resolution on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation and called on governments to take concrete action by:

* developing plans of action;
* establishing monitoring and accountability mechanisms that ensure free, effective, meaningful, and non-discriminatory participation of all people and communities;
* ensuring affordable services for everyone; and
* providing a framework of accountability with adequate monitoring mechanisms and legal remedies; and

WHEREAS bottled water is routinely used as an interim measure to lack of access to drinking water in many First Nations communities, but is not a sustainable or cost-effective solution; and

WHEREAS the *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act* creates necessary, high standards for drinking water, but was passed without allocating adequate funding and without free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous communities. These conditions can force Indigenous communities to turn to funding from private companies under the P3 (public-private partnership) Canada fund.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that *[name of Indigenous community]* recognizes and affirms that water and sanitation are fundamental human rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that *[name of Indigenous community]* opposes privatization in any form of water and wastewater treatment services, including through P3s, and keep these services community owned, operated and delivered; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that *[name of Indigenous community]* call upon the federal government to allocate $4.7 billion to water and wastewater infrastructure in First Nations communities, as called for by the National Engineering Assessment, and make adequate funding available without the condition of a P3 agreement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that bottled water will not be sold at any community facilities or events in *[name of Indigenous community]* where potable water is available; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the *[name of Indigenous community]* Chief and Council forward this resolution to the Assembly of First Nations for circulation to all First Nations; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that *[name of Indigenous community]* will call on the federal and provincial governments to enshrine water and sanitation as human rights in federal and provincial law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that *[name of Indigenous community]* will call on the government of Canada to develop a national plan of action to implement the human rights to water and sanitation.

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