

News release

For immediate release

All Water Treatment Plants in the Northwest Territories now meet National Guidelines.

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, November 2, 2020 – In partnership, the Federal, Territorial, and Community governments set a goal to see communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT) have modern Water Treatment Plants. As of October 5, 2020, this goal has been achieved when Wekweètì's new water plant was approved for use. There are no more simple truckfill stations for drinking water in the NWT. All NWT communities now have water treatment plants that include filtration.

Success can also be seen in community governments' investment in their staff. All 30 NWT water plants are now operated by local residents employed by the community government. Twenty-three of the plants have certified local operators. Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) is actively working with the remaining communities to upgrade the certification of their operators and provide additional oversight while these operators are training.

Community governments have been successfully utilizing Federal Infrastructure programs over the years to support this goal and supplement their Community Public Infrastructure Funding from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). The Federal programs used include:

- the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund
- the Build Canada Plan;
- the Small Communities Fund;
- the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund; and
- the Gas Tax Agreement.

The GNWT's interdepartmental team will continue to support our communities. We are committed to providing a coordinated approach that supports water systems including intake, treatment, and distribution. Ensuring access to safe drinking water for all NWT residents remains a priority.

Quotes

"Modern, efficient water infrastructure is essential to ensuring the health and well-being of our communities in the Northwest Territories. Federal and territorial governments have been working together to make sure drinking water supplies are safe for residents. This essential infrastructure, funded through the Investing in Canada plan, are key to ensuring that our communities continue to have access to safe and reliable drinking water."

Michael McLeod, Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories, on behalf of the Honourable Catherine McKenna, Minister of Infrastructure and Communities

"Improving the quality of water in the Northwest Territories is imperative to the North. This is a proud moment as we work in collaboration with the Federal Government and continue to deliver programs and support the safety and wellbeing of our residents. Our work is not done. MACA continues to work with community governments to assess their systems, plan for upgrades, and continues to support operators with ongoing training."

*The Honourable Paulie Chinna
Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs*

Quick facts

- In the spring of 1999, a small community in southern Ontario called Walkerton made national news because of the deaths and sickness that were linked to contamination in the municipality's drinking water supply. This incident served as a wake-up call for municipalities and governments across Canada to take stock of the state of drinking water supplies in communities across the nation.
- In the Northwest Territories, three levels of government including, the Government of Canada, the GNWT and community governments are jointly responsible for ensuring that drinking water is safe for human consumption.
- Since 2001, partnerships between the Federal Government, GNWT and community governments have resulted in 23 upgraded water treatment systems.
 - 16 communities have constructed new modern water treatment plants; and
 - an additional 7 have gone through mid-life retrofits or upgrades to meet the standards.
- Historically, many NWT communities used simple truck-fill stations with chlorine disinfection to obtain and distribute drinking water. These truck-fill stations did not have the capability to filter water and remove dirt, metals, and other health-impacting substances. There are no longer any NWT communities using a simple truck-fill station.

Associated links

Drinking Water in the Northwest Territories:

<https://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/en/services/drinking-water-nwt>

Federal infrastructure investments in Northwest Territories:

<https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca//investments-2002-investissements/nt-eng.html>

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For more information please visit: <https://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/en/services/drinking-water-nwt>

