



## News release

For immediate release:  
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### **Historic Service Delivery Transfer Agreement will give Indigenous control of water and wastewater management in communities**

**[Dartmouth, NS]** Today, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Indigenous Services, joined the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority (AFNWA), to sign a historic service delivery transfer agreement for water and wastewater service delivery. The agreement represents a significant milestone in advancing reconciliation and will put control of water and wastewater management firmly in the hands of Indigenous people.

This is the first ever service delivery transfer agreement to a First Nations-controlled regional water authority in Canada and initiates the transfer of responsibility for the operation, maintenance, and capital upgrades of all water and wastewater assets in participating First Nations to the Indigenous-led AFNWA.

The Agreement will position the Authority to assume responsibility for water and wastewater services for as many as 4,500 households and businesses located in 17 participating First Nations. This represents approximately 60% of the on-reserve population of First Nation communities in Atlantic Canada.

The Government of Canada has committed approximately \$257 million in funding from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) including \$173 million over 10 years from Budget 2022 to support the transfer of water and wastewater services to the AFNWA.

As part of the service delivery transfer, Indigenous Services Canada and the AFNWA, have negotiated a long-term funding arrangement which will provide the utility with sustainable funding for operations and capital programs. It will set out both ISC's and the AFNWA's mutual obligations, accountability, and understanding for implementation.

### **Quotes**

"This has been a long time in the making and we are grateful to the leadership and commitment from our communities to get us to this milestone. We look forward to building capacity and increasing the level of service to standards enjoyed by other

residents of Canada. We have blazed a trail for others to follow but that is the way of the Wabanaki who have always been first to see the dawn.”

Potlotek First Nation Chief Wilbert Marshall,  
Chair of the Board, Atlantic First Nation Water Authority

“The signing of this agreement represents a significant milestone in advancing reconciliation, and will contribute to safe and healthy Indigenous communities in Atlantic Canada. I am so proud to play a small part in this exciting process, which is helping to fulfill the Government of Canada’s commitment to address social and economic gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.”

The Honourable Patty Hajdu,  
Minister of Indigenous Services

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**Quick facts**

- The AFNWA is a First Nations-owned, not-for-profit organization incorporated in 2018 to manage the delivery of safe, clean drinking water and wastewater in participating First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada. This first-of-its-kind, First

Nations-led initiative will help chart the path to self-determination while strengthening the management of water and wastewater systems on reserves.

- This service delivery transfer agreement forms the basis for participating First Nations to become members of the AFNWA. Once implemented, the agreement transfers responsibility for the operation, maintenance, and capital upgrades of all water and wastewater assets in participating First Nations to the Atlantic First Nation Water Authority.
- In June 2020, Indigenous Services Canada and the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority signed a Framework Agreement. It outlined the negotiation process and the roles and responsibilities for all parties and defined the relationship between Indigenous Services Canada and the AFNWA going forward under this new First Nation-led, service delivery model.
- Since 2012, ISC has invested \$12 million for the development of the Atlantic First Nation Water Authority to support full asset management, engagements, and organizational/model development. This funding also includes \$3.9 million provided this year for the AFNWA to start operations.