

Statement



Demand access to water on National Indigenous Peoples Day

June 21, 2018

June 21 is National Indigenous Peoples Day and it is recognized here on Turtle Island, commonly referred to as Canada, as an annual day to celebrate the unique heritage, vibrant cultures, and outstanding achievements of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people. Unifor proudly acknowledges Indigenous peoples and their tremendous contributions in shaping our union, building our communities, and fighting for a just and equitable world.

While Unifor celebrates and thanks Indigenous Peoples, the union also acknowledges and openly reflects on past wrongs and the ongoing injustices Indigenous peoples face. For more than 150 years Indigenous Peoples have suffered through failed policies and laws, while non-Indigenous People in Canada have continued to benefit from this exploitative relationship. It is time for not just reconciliation but truth and justice.

Part of that pursuit of truth and justice means recognizing and acting on the unequal treatment that continues even today for Indigenous people and their communities. One example of this is the access to public services and water.

Clean and safe drinking water is a basic human right. Yet many Indigenous communities within Canada are deprived of the right to water. An estimated 20,000 Indigenous people living on reserves across this country have no access to running water or sewage. There are more than 100 water advisories that are routinely in effect preventing the use of water, with some Indigenous communities living under advisories for nearly 20 years. Learn more about the struggle for water by reading this Unifor [resource](#).

Previously June 21 was recognized as National Aboriginal Day. Changing the name of June 21 to National Indigenous Peoples Day is a positive step forward, but name changes alone won't lead to reconciliation. This is why on June 21 Unifor is calling on all members to take action.

Make a statement to demand safe and clean drinking water for Indigenous Peoples. Print and share this poster with your workplace, local union office, and communities. Send a message about access to water to your MP and share this social media image to spread truth and demand justice to for the Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

Today, Unifor calls on the federal government to deliver on its \$4.6 billion infrastructure investment in Indigenous communities to ensure there is drinkable water. The federal government must ensure that Indigenous communities lead the processes and have the tools, money, and training needed for operation and maintenance systems. The federal government must recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach won't address the varying needs of different Indigenous communities.

Through this and other initiatives, Unifor reaffirms our commitment to building awareness and standing with Indigenous Peoples in protecting land and water. As a union, we understand solidarity, action and revealing truth is the only path that can lead to reconciliation.

For more information on National Indigenous Peoples Day click [here](#).

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