



May 26, 2010

Tory bill aims to regulate drinking water in First Nations communities

The Canadian Press

OTTAWA—Drinking water in First Nations communities would be brought to the same standard as water off reserves under a bill introduced by the Conservative government.

Legislation tabled in the Senate on Wednesday by Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl would pave the way to apply federal regulations for drinking water and wastewater on reserves.

Provincial and territorial laws on water currently don't extend to aboriginal communities.

"It's something that's been recommended repeatedly that we need legislative standards for water so that First Nations can have the same expectations as any other Canadian," Strahl said.

To account for regional differences, each province and territory could have a slightly different set of federal regulations under the government bill.

"What we hope to do, in a sense, is mirror the standards that you would expect in the region that the First Nations is living," Strahl said.

The Conservatives also announced a two-year extension of the First Nations Water and Wastewater Action Plan, at a cost of \$330 million.

The money will help pay for water and wastewater facilities. It will also pay for a national assessment of the water and wastewater needs in aboriginal communities. The report is expected later this year.

The government also says all aboriginal communities now have access to professionals to sample and test their tap water. And the Tories noted 92 per cent of native communities had access to water-testing kits last year, up from 56 per cent in 2002.

Torstar Syndication Services



2010 Torstar Syndication Services. Permission granted for up to 5 copies. All rights reserved.

You may forward this article or get additional permissions by typing http://license.icopyright.net/3.7212?picx_id=814712 into any web browser. Torstar Syndication Services and Toronto Star logos are registered trademarks of Torstar Syndication Services. The iCopyright logo is a registered trademark of iCopyright, Inc.