



## **BACKGROUND**

### **Consortium Leadership Group – 2015 Municipal Water Priorities Report**

The Consortium Leadership Group (CLG) consists of senior water executives from municipalities and utilities across Canada who identify national water management priorities, share knowledge and pool resources, positioning themselves to make better-informed decisions and investments.

The CLG includes representatives from Halifax Water, Toronto Water, York Region, Peel Region, Durham Region, Union Water Supply, Region of Waterloo, the City of Regina, EPCOR, the City of Hamilton, the City of Calgary, the Capital Regional District (Victoria), and Ontario Clean Water Agency.

#### **About the 2015 Municipal Water Priorities Report**

In Canada, water touches every facet of our lives – connecting our economy, our ecosystems and the health of our communities. Addressing each of these areas through a “water lens” can lead to integrated approaches that can achieve more resilient communities across Canada.

Canadian Water Network’s Canadian Municipal Water Consortium (CMWC) takes a deeper look into national priorities in the 2015 Canadian Municipal Water Priorities Report.

The inaugural *Canadian Municipal Water Priorities* report, released in 2014, set the stage for the initiatives of the CMWC. The CMWC’s Leadership Group (CLG) identified four priority areas within the themes of integrated risk management, full cost recovery and financing, wastewater resource recovery and beneficial use of biosolids, and resiliency to storms and extreme weather.

This second annual Priorities Report Creates a common narrative to advance the national discussions between researchers, practitioners and decision-makers. It highlights advancements and provides insight into the most effective paths forward, paving the way to continued action for municipal water solutions.

#### **How will national priorities lead to solutions and innovation?**

##### **National Priority #1: Assess frameworks to support integrated risk management to support management of municipal drinking water, wastewater, stormwater and urban watersheds**

Municipal water management is at its core an exercise in risk management, and it presents a unique set of challenges. Establishing more effective ways of managing the full suite of risks across systems is needed to deal with the current challenges posed by aging infrastructure, urbanization, population growth and climate change.



The CMWC is working to broaden proactive risk management to all areas of municipal water management and support a more integrated approach. This will result in water managers having a better understanding of risks that can affect multiple water systems and the ability to effectively match mitigation efforts to minimize risks appropriately.

**National Priority #2: Assess the state of knowledge and practice for full cost recovery and financing for water systems**

Canada has come a long way in the past decade in terms of how water systems are managed and financed. While water management was once characterized by low rates and high consumption, the country is slowly transitioning to a rate system that more accurately represents the true cost of water. Part of this discussion includes the potential for recovery and reuse of water, energy and other resources.

More robust and effective full cost recovery and financing models for water management can be achieved by assessing a broader inventory of options and approaches. Expanding and detailing the inventory will help Canadian cities have a better understanding of the different financing models being applied in Canada and their relative merits. Doing so will achieve more resilient and sustainable communities in Canada, both now and in the future.

**National Priority #3: Identify the possibilities and implications of wastewater resource recovery and beneficial use of biosolids**

The efficient management of waste and other materials that are flushed down the drain is a key component of a successful water strategy. This is also an area where uncertainty about possible health issues and the applicability of new technologies figure prominently in decision making.

Land-application of biosolids is a key area of consideration when evaluating resource recovery or reuse options.

One of the key questions currently impacting choices about resource recovery options is assessing the potential environmental and public health implications of contaminants resulting from wastewater discharges or land application of biosolids. The Priorities Report assesses the best practices for mitigating the impacts of trace substances and nutrients.

**National Priority #4: Determine what is practical and achievable in making municipal water systems more resilient to storms and extreme weather**

Most communities in Canada are recognizing that it is not *if* but *when* and *how often* events like major storms, droughts or extreme temperatures will impact them. Municipalities are experiencing flood, drought and broken infrastructure due to extreme cold.

Improved predictive tools that municipalities can use to build infrastructure will help effectively mitigate the impacts of extreme weather events. There is also a rise of grey and green approaches to stormwater management, and a need to focus on innovative approaches to prepare and respond to storms and extreme weather.



### **About the Canadian Municipal Water Consortium**

The Canadian Municipal Water Consortium (CMWC) is a nation-wide collaboration that helps leading edge water professionals anticipate, respond and adapt to key challenges and emerging trends in municipal water management. Since 2009, the CMWC has delivered state-of-the-knowledge assessments, workshops and national research projects on drinking water, stormwater, wastewater and urban watersheds.

### **About Canadian Water Network**

Canadian Water Network (CWN) is Canada's premier water research management organization. CWN connects resources, people and knowledge to ensure that industry, government and NGOs can access and apply the right solutions to address their water challenges.

### **For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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*Attention broadcasters: CWN has facilities to provide broadcast quality audio and video feeds with a double-ender studio. Please contact Kathryn Ross at 519-888-4567 ext 37709 or kross@cwn-rce.ca for more information.*