CANADIAN WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION

Investing in Consistent Water Quality and Information for All Canadians

2025-2026 Pre-Budget Submission

The Canadian Water Quality Association Recommends:

1. Partner with the Canadian Water Quality Association (CWQA) to create and maintain a Canadian Water Quality Map;

    a. Commit to standardize water quality data across regions;
    b. Provide $30 000 to assess existing data and technologies necessary for the creation of the Canadian Water Quality Map;
    c. Provide $400 000 to establish the preliminary Canadian Water Quality Map and commit $75 000 annually to maintain the map, in partnership with the Canadian Water Quality Organization.

2. Invest in water treatment drain and installation needs when fulfilling Canada's Housing Plan.

3. Create a tax credit of 25% of the value of a new water treatment system up to a value of $500 per household for the purchase of water quality technology systems that protect against drinking water contaminants.

4. Work with provincial and territorial partners to establish a professional certification for water quality technicians that is recognized and endorsed by all levels of government.

About the Canadian Water Quality Association

The Canadian Water Quality Association (CWQA) was founded in 1956, as water dealers came together to represent the collective needs of the industry. Since then, the group has advocated for increased public education on water quality in Canada, assisting government in understanding our industry and delivering clean drinking water to all Canadians. The CWQA directly represents more than 200 small and medium-sized businesses across the country, acting as Canada's leading voice in the residential, commercial, and industrial water treatment industry.

Water quality is a vital part of Canada's economy, generating $3 billion in annual economic activity, and providing over $720 million in federal and provincial revenues each year. Our industry supports over 10,000 jobs, paying more than $500 million in wages in Canada, and constitutes a sector where Canada is recognized as a global leader and a critical innovator. We train and certify over 1000 companies in Canada in advanced water quality delivery. Our goal is to be a resource of information to the public and government on water treatment and our industry

Introduction

For generations, Canadians could depend on many sources of freshwater to drink, bathe, cook with, to irrigate crops, and to support local industries. Today, more contaminants from industrial and agricultural processes threaten the freshwater systems and watersheds that millions of Canadians depend on in their daily lives.

Governments at all levels have an important role to play, as do conservation officials, environmental regulators, businesses and the public. More reliable water quality decisions begin with accessible data and education that is consistent from coast-to-coast-to-coast.

CWQA is calling on the federal government to invest in Canada's most precious resource: water. We are ready to partner with the government to provide informed data, expertise in the water quality industry, and connections across the country to offer Canadians the water infrastructure and information they deserve.

Recommendation 1: The federal government partner with the Canadian Water Quality Association (CWQA) through the Canada Water Agency to create and maintain a Canadian Water Quality Map.

Canadian citizens deserve reliable access to information and education on the quality of their water, and whether it has been treated before it reaches their homes. At present, water quality data in Canada is inconsistently collected and reported. It is also difficult to access – or in the case of many rural and remote areas, does not exist at all.

Canada's 'National Long-term Water Quality Monitoring Data' open map viewer is confusing, limited, and lacks up-to-date information that the public, businesses, or researchers require. The United States boasts a much more comprehensive and accessible Water Contaminant Map.

The Water Quality Research Foundation's "WQRF Contaminant Occurrence Map" offers robust, consistent, and easily accessible data on 57 different contaminants to gauge their occurrence, provided by 46 state regulatory agencies. That map provides greater information about the resources in each participating state than Canada's equivalents provide nationwide.

Much of the data and infrastructure required to develop a robust, national water quality resource already exists in the hands of our members and municipalities. The CWQA has a large membership and network who have access to testing labs and facilities. The breadth of data

collected by CWQA members, municipalities, regional water authorities, and researchers would be maximized by directing it to a single, comprehensive resource that would empower consumers, homeowners, and small businesses to make informed choices about treating their water.

Partnering with the federal government through the Canada Water Agency to design and implement a national Canadian Water Quality Map is one of our sector's paramount goals for 2025. By partnering with a national not-for-profit, the government would be following the example of the successful partnership seen in the United States, while allowing the government to take advantage of the institutional knowledge available from CWQA's existing partnership with the American Water Quality Association (WQA).

Commit to standardize water quality data across regions.

Water quality data collection across Canada is currently disparate and disconnected. Our members provide services across a breadth of provinces and municipalities, and there are often inconsistencies in the manner data is collected across these jurisdictions. Standardized data collection, storage and reporting across regions would allow our members to seamlessly transition across jurisdictions, benefiting water treatment professionals and the Canadians who are seeking professional water technician services.

Consistent guidelines and standards for water collection data will simplify the process for government to monitor contaminants in Canadian water sources. It builds opportunities for strengthening public education and programming on water quality in Canada, ensuring consumers know that they are making the best choice for their homes and families when it comes to in-home water treatment.

Provide $30 000 to assess existing data and technologies necessary for the creation of the Canadian Water Quality Map.

Additional funding is necessary to take inventory of what data water quality data exists with the intent of discovering gaps that need to be filled. We must first invest in accurately defining the scope of the project to streamline the establishment of the Water Quality Map and create future cost savings in the operational expenses of developing the map.

Committing to standardized water quality data creates an opportunity for the government to define its own priorities as they relate to resource quality map creation, promotion and access. We can build a supportive partnership with the government by providing the additional data collected by our members to inform the current water landscape in Canada, while supporting the existing networks in place and the independent data they collect.

Provide $400 000 to establish the preliminary Canadian Water Quality Map and commit $75 000 per year ongoing to maintain the map, in partnership with the Canadian Water Quality Organization.

We estimate the costs to be $400 000 to establish an effective, regularly updated, national, open-source water quality map that exists an online resource for all Canadians. We also anticipate $25 000 in design fees, based on the U.S. model. For continued operating expenses, we anticipate $75 000 in annual overhead.

Existing data will be used to develop the foundation of the Canadian Water Quality Map making it necessary to hire professionals with a knowledge of GIS software and coding to geographically pinpoint test and extraction sites. We expect securing that expertise to significantly contribute to the total cost of $390 000 in the first year of development of the Canadian Water Quality Map.

Following the establishment of the map and its release to the public, the costs to maintain the map will be approximately $75 000 per year, including the costs associated with hiring a staff person or contractor who receives, interprets and cleans the data, updates the map, and provides maintenance of the tool's code once established. We hope that the federal government could grant half of these funds to CWQA to support the tool, or this could be substituted with potential cost-recovery models. For example, cost recovery could take the form of a fee for users to download the data that they need across multiple locations.

Recommendation 2: Invest in water treatment drain and installation needs when fulfilling Canada's Housing Plan

Communities from coast-to-coast-to-coast are about to embark on a generational project of building new housing along with the infrastructure and waterworks systems required to welcome over 500,000 newcomers to Canada each year. The construction of that infrastructure will pressure existing systems designed to bring water to families and businesses, and may cause contamination of valuable sources of fresh, potable water.

The federal government has committed to an ambitious home-building strategy that will require infrastructure outfitting. This is an opportunity to support domestic water technology production. Our members manufacture and sell innovative water infrastructure and our products are an investment worth including in Canada's home-building strategy.

Without investing in water quality infrastructure in upcoming developments, rigorous home-building only solves the temporary problem because it predisposes homes to avoidable challenges that can be attributed to outdated or poor-quality infrastructure. When water technology infrastructure is prioritized, it mitigates disasters such as burst pipes, benefiting homeowners and our members who can readily outfit homes with quality water technology products. Updates to the National Building Code are needed to accommodate dedicated drains for water treatment solutions, a no-cost investment in water quality.

Recommendation 3: Create a tax credit of 25% of the value of a new water treatment system up to a value of $500 per home for the purchase of water technology systems that lower water consumption and contaminants.

There is a growing demand in Canadian homes for water technology systems that mitigate excessive water consumption and contamination in home water systems. Providing a tax credit of 25% of the value of a new water treatment system up to a value of $500 to individual homes who invest in water technology systems uplifts Canadians in accessing clean water they otherwise may not be able to afford. Supporting Canadian homes in accessing affordable water technology would increase the economic activity in the water quality industry, supporting our members and the industry in its entirety.

Rural and remote communities are more susceptible to contaminated water without affordable access to water technology systems. Providing a tax credits to rural and remote homes is a step towards reconciling inequities across Canadian communities with regards to accessible water that is free from contaminants. Building on these benefits, access to newer water quality equipment will also mitigate excessive water consumption.

Recommendation 4: Work with provincial and territorial partners to establish a professional certification for water quality technicians that is recognized and endorsed by all levels of government.

The federal government and provincial partners are considering a national certification for well technicians that would support homeowners in rural communities. The Atlantic provinces are being hard hit by rising arsenic levels in groundwater. As more minerals, chemicals, pathogens, and aesthetic contaminants find their way into our drinking water, homeowners and renters need better information about the people offering to improve the quality of water in their homes.

Some provinces have already taken important steps to protect consumers from high-pressure, and door-to-door sales tactics that have harmed the reputation of our industry.

CWQA believes it is time for a nationally recognized credential that will clearly identify ethical, well-trained experts in the treatment of water. Establishing a professional certification, in collaboration with provinces and territories, will improve the quality of training and the quality of service provided by professionals in our sector. It will also improve consumer awareness and increase accountability for businesses that sell and service water treatment equipment to homeowners. Ensuring the appropriate equipment selection and improving installations and service of that equipment will have a marked impact on the conservation of water and the quality of water that flows back into the water system.

The federal government, led by ESDC, should work with partners at Environment and Climate Change Canada and Natural Resources Canada, well as their provincial counterparts, to establish a credential that supports better outcomes for the environment, for consumers, and for businesses.