

April 12, 2023

House of Commons Standing Committee  
on Environment and Sustainable Development  
[ENVI@parl.gc.ca](mailto:ENVI@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Committee Members:

**RE: House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development's Study on Freshwater – Addendum to CWWA/ACEPU comments**

The Canadian Water and Wastewater Association/association canadienne des eaux potables et usées (CWWA/ACEPU) made a full submission to the Committee on May 6, 2021. We will not repeat those comments here, but attach them with this letter for your reference. That first letter focused on the potential for an effort to coordinate the multiple federal departments and agencies that address water and supported a consolidation of the databases for shared access and use.

Since that time, CWWA/ACEPU has been focusing more on the potential for “natural infrastructure” as a practical solution, and we have recently submitted comments to a review of the Canada Infrastructure bank.

Thinking outside of the strict water operations and engineered solutions, municipal utilities are seeing the practicality of incorporating the natural environment as part of the solution, especially with regard to storm resilience (both flooding and drought). The CWWA/ACEPU has just completed a survey of our members to gauge their understanding of the concepts, implementation of natural infrastructure projects and to identify the challenges they face to implementation. We will share the results and report by June.

Meanwhile, we were asked to participate in the review of the Canada Infrastructure Bank and to comment on how the Bank could be of greater assistance to, and have a greater impact on, the water sector. In addition to identifying a few technical barriers, we offered a suggestion on how the Bank might better support the Water Innovation sector in Canada.

Canadian engineers and manufacturers are poised to be world leaders in water innovation. While the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Industry is working to build up this critical sector, and the Ministry of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development is working hard to promote Canadian technology abroad, it has been difficult for such innovation to be adopted at home. How could the CIB (or another federal agency) use its funds to support Canadian innovation while addressing critical infrastructure needs?

Canadian municipalities are risk averse – and rightly so. Infrastructure projects can overwhelm a municipality’s financing. Failure of a major water project can bankrupt a community and put lives at risk if a new technology fails. Would the CIB (or another agency) consider using its vast funds as an “innovation insurance”? If a community selects a new Canadian innovative solution, and agrees to be an early adopter, what happens if that technology fails? Might the federal government be committed to step in to finance another immediate solution?

As always, we are here as THE national voice of the municipal water sector in Canada. We are pleased to know that this Committee is continuing its work and we offer our assistance in any way we can provide it.

Sincerely,

*Robert Haller*

Robert Haller  
Executive Director