

# Bringing the Canada Water Agency to Sault Ste. Marie

A summary of Algoma District community perspectives, heard by the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Canada Water Agency Task Force

**Sessions held August-December 2021 | Summary completed January 10, 2022**

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Facilitated by Dr. Elaine Ho-Tassone and Kathleen Heymans with the support of Jessica Maione  
Summary compiled by Dr. Elaine Ho-Tassone

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# Background

- The Government of Canada is establishing a Canada Water Agency to improve freshwater management across the country.
- On June 28, 2021, Sault Ste. Marie City Council approved the formation of a Task Force to explore this potential opportunity.
- The Task Force is developing a proposal to bring the Canada Water Agency to our community, which incorporates community feedback that is published in a local ‘What We Heard’ report.
- The City partnered with Lake Huron North to lead a series of community discussions to guide the City’s development of a proposal to the Federal Government.
- This presentation captures the full record of contributions made by community members.

# 2019 ECCC MANDATE:

A Canada  
Water  
Agency...

“...**to work together** with the provinces, territories, Indigenous communities, local authorities, scientists and others **to find the best ways to keep our water safe, clean and well-managed.**”

Also, “...**to develop further protections** and take **active steps to clean up** the Great Lakes, Lake Winnipeg, Lake Simcoe and other **large lakes.**”

# Canada Water Agency Task Force members

**Tom Vair**, Deputy CAO,  
City of Sault Ste. Marie

**Rick Van Staveren**,  
Director of Economic  
Development, City of  
Sault Ste. Marie

**Kathleen Heymans**,  
Manager of Business  
Development, City of  
Sault Ste. Marie

**Travis Anderson**,  
Director of Tourism &  
Community  
Development, City of  
Sault Ste. Marie

**Emily Cormier**,  
Sustainability  
Coordinator, City of  
Sault Ste. Marie

**Christian Provenzano**,  
Mayor, City of Sault  
Ste. Marie

**Cory Gardi**, City  
Councillor, City of  
Sault Ste. Marie

**Dr. Elaine Ho-Tassone**,  
Project Coordinator,  
Lake Huron North

**Dr. Paula Antunes**,  
freshwater researcher  
and consultant

**Ryan Namespetra**,  
Natural Environment  
Coordinator, Sault  
College

In 10 sessions (August 24 to December 11):

208 people and organizations contributed, most of which are youth.

12 written comments – 6 via Zoho form, 4 via email (with one follow-up phone call)

6 representatives of organizations in person, 10 online

5 Indigenous persons attending in person, 1 online

136 secondary school students through Algoma District School Board

6 from postsecondary institutions

10 from the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council

22 from the general sessions

# Schedule of community discussions

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## **Organizational Stakeholders:**

In-Person Meeting on Tuesday August 24th, 3-5pm, at the Sault College Waterfront Adventure Centre  
Online Meeting on Thursday August 26th, 11am-1pm

## **Indigenous Persons:**

In-Person Meeting on Wednesday August 25th, 10am-1pm, at the Arbor, Algoma University  
Online Meeting on Wednesday, September 1st, 1-3pm

## **Youth (ages 15-24 years old):**

Online Meeting 1 - Algoma District School Board on Tuesday, October 26th, 10-11am  
Online Meeting 2 - Algoma District School Board on Tuesday, October 26th, 1-2pm  
Online Meeting 3 - Post-secondary Students on Monday, November 8th, 11:30am-1pm  
Online Meeting 4 - Mayor's Youth Advisory Council on November 26th, 4-4:30pm

## **All Community:**

Online Meeting 1 on Saturday, September 11th, 11am-1pm  
Online Meeting 2 on Saturday, December 11th, 11am-1pm

# Summary

- Our location is prime: centre of the Great Lakes and Canada; critical shipping region; border location with existing binational cooperation in academia, business, and policy; local expertise (formal and lived experience).
- We must recognize our position (in the Sault) as a historically polluting community and our collective responsibility (Sault and across Canada) to grow from this position into leaders of fresh water remediation.
- Indigenous voice and leadership *must* be more prominent.
- Canada's large lakes must be recognized as more than a resource. These places have immense social-economic value as the original navigable 'highways', primary regions of settlement over our history, and meaningful cultural and spiritual values for our First Peoples as well as Canadians.

# Summary

- Community members are supportive of bringing the CWA to the Sault and hope this will be supplemented by a local strategy/actions to address issues that are not within the federal purview. For example:
  - Participants highlighted the need for education of community members (likely a role for the Conservation Authority, NGOs, and academic institutions to address or coordinate).
  - In addition to education, community members (youth and adult) were keen to be more engaged but felt there were limited opportunities to support water quality objectives locally.
  - In addition to mitigation and adaptation (likely foci of the CWA), community members and NGOs (including industry) must consider upstream preventative measures to ensure remediation efforts are lasting.





# Meeting notes

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A complete capture  
of each discussion

# Organizations in-person (Aug 24 from 3-5)

## Current state

Multiple levels authorities w/ all different agendas, directions  
 ↳ How to change this?

Water action at the whim of each government in power

Maintaining improving freshwater health is a priority at all levels of community life

Clean water supports the Federal Govt honoring its current obligations to provide clean water to all FNs, before creating a new agency.

Why? we have the tech & \$ to solve the FN clean water issue across Canada. Just Do It! Legal, humanitarian, ethical - all relevant

education about what the public can do to protect water

Impacts to Freshwater Health

-more education on visibility regularly impacting local

Health - Education Townships City SSM.

All Freshwater is a priority.

Idea Enviro Commissioner mandates are they being achieved? Auditor General for freshwater

-more promotion/action on formally protecting water/shore lines

## Actions

Indigenous Nations cannot be identified as Indigenous Communities (PM statement)

Can Water Agency is flawed when Indigenous Nations are not at the table as full partner Nat

Fed gov of Indigenous Waters issue

Availability of clean public drinking water

-great to have the resources about water locally  
 -centre of the Great Lakes seems like a logical spot

Change the fundamental PM statement Best ways:  
 "Do gov't groups have right mandates?"

Canada Water Agency - define a specific scope that is diff from what already exists.

SSM Resource & Strengths once disseminate articulated  
 being appropriate & influential participants to the table.

## Future state

Community water monitoring "CBM"

Monitoring feeds large shared understanding system thinking

The value of secure freshwater is universally accepted - de-politicized - multi-jurisdiction issues resolved.

Recognition of intrinsic value of water -

New jobs for the community

Refer to clean water not in "current"

Decolonizing "stewardship/management" Indigenous led in all aspects of develop. We wouldn't have BPA.

Midewin prophecy announced by gold = water by 2030

Change governance model for water.

our location

We require much more clarity on the proposed mandate & authority for a proposed CWA before being able to comment substantially why?

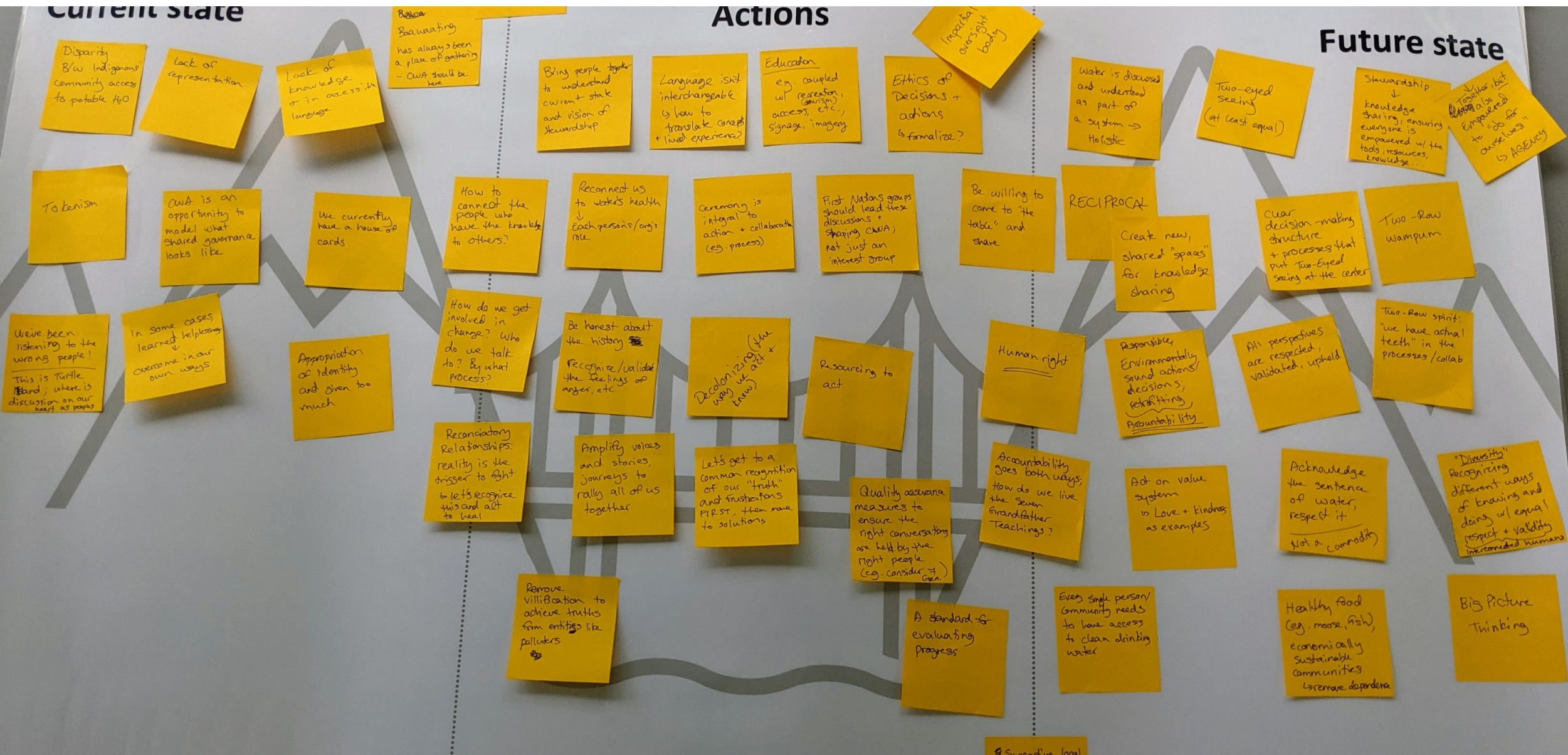
A proposed new CWA - without a clear mandate & regulatory authority may or may not add value to the current mix of organs.

To be different "Indigenous-led" that would make it different

Better access for freshwater science in SSM Algoma

Current Relationships

# Indigenous in-person (Aug 25 from 11-1)



## Current state

- Sometimes BMPs aren't practical or currently possible in some areas (e.g., north); resources/supports are needed to ensure these become possible
- *Value prop*: Ideal location:
  - Great research institutions of all levels + academia, communities
  - Geographically center of Canada, transportation hub, heart of Great Lakes
- We expect diversion pressures to increase (implications for water security?)
- Robust system for industry regulation that should be maintained
- *Value prop*: Most of our energy is renewable – self-proclaimed north American capital of 'green energy'
- Municipalities are at the whim of the province and have limited resources to achieve growing mandates in water
- Regional model ideal

## Actions

- Education is needed to bring people to a common understanding of how integral water is to our lives – different peoples' lives, in different ways; also different uses
- Local actions on large scale issues → *Collective impact* → ensure everyone understands their role, how organizations/agency can support local action, to contribute to large scale impact
- Industrial uses are innovating on water takings/use
- Amplify voices of smaller communities (e.g., in agriculture) → we have a lot of great researchers, a lot of great examples to share
- Before we try to anything, we need to better understand our strengths and figure out what our roles could be/how we can be engaged (e.g., what are the skillsets we need, where are the people with those skills) in developing the pitch for a CWA
- As part of education/awareness, ensure everyone understands there are still risks and still actions that must be prioritized; also, recognize how much water interrupts peoples' lives globally – we are lucky, let's show appreciation and leadership! Can we help elsewhere? Technologies, etc.?
- Citizen engagement projects (e.g., native species only in your yard, increase permeable surfaces, etc.) → highlight what can be controlled in everyday life
- Create more bridges between governments (including Indigenous nations) → potential role for CWA
- CWA role also to ensure information is easily accessible to all, *and* knowledge of how to apply it to various issues/in various contexts (e.g., maybe also guidelines for BMPs of management resources)

## Future state

- Timelines to achieve our vision(s) may be different for each area within and outside of Algoma; there should be a hard deadline of 2025 or earlier for drinking water across Canada (former goal was 2020) – all vision points should be within the next decade
  - Canada-wide *watershed* management strategy
  - Access to fresh water for those who don't have (for variety of uses – drinking, industry, agriculture); we are fortunate that many in our area have access to reliable, clean water
  - Water must be seen as something that encompasses all aspects of our life (water use, water cycle)
  - Water is not simply a commodity (or is it at all?)
  - Indigenous perspectives are not a footnote; they must be incorporated throughout and should be core to development of the mandate
  - Ensure no duplication among/between other mandates; it's not just another piece to the water management puzzle in Canada, it has to be a bridge
  - No more siloes
  - Caveat: A Canada Water Agency would need to be more than advisory to get these things done
- 
- No complacency with water despite perceived abundance – a common understanding of the impacts we all have on the system and that also impacts us in return, there are still risks, especially re: climate change
  - Canadians understand water scarcity/risks around the world and our role(s) in that; also, aware of global innovations
  - International scope of consideration!
  - Motto is "Water is life" → we all depend on it, and in order to protect life, you have to protect water; also 'water is life central to Indigenous way of life'

Organizations  
online (Aug 26  
from 11-1)

## Current state

- So many agencies from the government; we're not doing enough, we're falling behind.
- It's Indigenous peoples' responsibility.

## Actions

- There are people starting to step up and a lot of sentiments being shared – let's share this further and build on it towards action.
- Debunk the assumption that "we're on it" (e.g., assuming the water testing etc. is happening, because it isn't).
- Indigenous lens to research and exploration regarding freshwater health and our interactions with the waters.
- Look at access to services, building of (digital) literacy, indicators of human and environmental health (collectively).
- Broaden the scope of thinking to encompass basic human rights

## Future state

- Water is a human right; also relates to our rights as Indigenous peoples (e.g., reference to UNDRIP)
  - Water is a symbol/metaphor → inherent right to clean water, sovereignty, housing, alleviation from poverty...

Indigenous online  
(Sep 1 from 1-3)

## Current state

- To consider for the proposal: are we doing anything innovative that would set us apart?
  - Industry continues – is the CWA going to help mitigate impacts?
  - We have existing pollution that we aren't addressing – will the CWA help to raise a process for rectifying it? Or, will it create resistance to host here (e.g., ferrochrome factory)
  - US is a bigger player to the south... how much of a role is Canada going to play?
  - Existing collaborative relationships – e.g., IJC, GLWQA
- 

**General online  
(Sep 11 from  
11-1)**

## Actions

- Need more outreach in terms of letting people know how they can be involved.
  - Are there emergent issues in our area (e.g., lake/ground water)? People don't know these.
  - Language is important – pay attention to it!
  - We may need some education to ensure that community members don't feel that the CWA is a threat to further local economic development; may require a skilled public outreach person to ensure people don't carry this perspective
  - Promote the economic perspective of how it would help the city to improve (job creation etc.)
- 
- Local industry groups (e.g., Algoma Steel) have a lot of water expertise; we need to get these groups involved and participating in a collaborative, shared-responsibility process
    - Also demonstrates there doesn't need to be a choice between environment-economy
  - Sault college (as an org) should be involved in the bid and meeting local water objectives
  - OWRA should be involved
  - University co-ops (e.g., with Canada Water Agency) or other collaborative programming; can we facilitate education across industries?
  - Ensure diverse expertise is engaged – wastewater, public health, etc.

## Future state

- Consider conservation, quality, and quantity, as well as ground and surface water → common standards across both
  - Involving First Nation
  - So much happening in the US – why don't we align with them rather than create our own silo?
  - Information is provided that reconciles and prevents dichotomous perspectives – i.e., we no longer believe we must choose between environment and economy
- 
- Highly-collaborative

## Current state

### VALUE PROPOSITION

- Great Lakes location
- Core location influencing transportation (of goods and people) across the great Lakes region (Canada-US) – social economic impact
- Several populations of Indigenous nations in the immediate area – drinking water a priority (clean water)
- One of 11 communities nominated for [Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot](#)
  - Will attract more people, create jobs
- Conserving natural resources core to tourism; feds should prioritize this in areas like the Sault
- Last major cities in northern Ontario before reaching the next provincial → Need to create a network of northern communities – there are few communities in the north and they are rarely represented in existing agencies/governing bodies
- Significant cost difference in cost of living, services – shocking difference for things like utilities, food, energy; can we attract more investment, more tourism, more infrastructure/development to northern regions (e.g., Sault as a champion for northern regions)

## Actions

- Identify major water consumers/users; manage demand and manage utilization (e.g., distribution), also related development (e.g., infrastructure related to it)
- Connect with local Indigenous organizations in the development of a CWA proposal → influence decision-making
- Industry needs to be a part of this process, during the proposal and after as well (i.e., if CWA comes here)

## Future state

- Universal access to clean, safe, drinking water

**Postsecondary  
youth (Nov 8  
from 11:30-12:20**

## Current state

- Lots of traffic here as the gateway between Superior and Huron (pollution issues as well as value proposition)
- Diverse water issues across the region, and opportunities for pilot remediation sites for policy purposes
- Water security is an issue across here – wells drying is a constant health issue as well as economic (having to dig deeper and change wells)
- Water is valued by surrounding Indigenous communities

## Actions

- Water security is a public health issue → regional but a nationwide vision or standard is needed

## Future state

- Standard: “Swim, Drink, Fish”
  - Other than the ideal, also supports cultural/customary practices
- No more long-term boil water advisories
- Funding for water infrastructure *and ongoing funding* for maintaining and staffing water and wastewater treatment facilities in remote communities

Mayor's Youth  
Advisory Council (Nov  
26 from 4-4:30pm)



## Current state

- Location at the heart of the great lakes
  - Opportunities for binational cooperation are immense
  - Diversity and quantity of water systems in the Algoma area
  - Historically significant meeting place of cultural significance
  - Superior largest lake in the world (volume)
  - Multigovernment presence (local, regional, Fed); also different issues – invasive species (ISC), lamprey
  - Local expertise includes Algoma U, Soo College, LSSU
  - Opportunities to understand governance in the context not only of great lakes but also of their contributing streams
  - Upstream indicator of water quality (upstream of high-density regions in the lower lakes)
  - Our community is very supportive of fund raising with many service groups eager to help community improvement projects
  - Significant variance in water sources to study impact by environment and humans including ground water runoff impact on get lakes
  - Sault is accessible
- 
- May not be a great place – hot spot for pollution (great example of how not to do things) → focus on mitigation and adaptation is not what we need
  - Will the CWA permit and inspire local changes that matter on the broader scale of Canada's large lakes? → collective impact

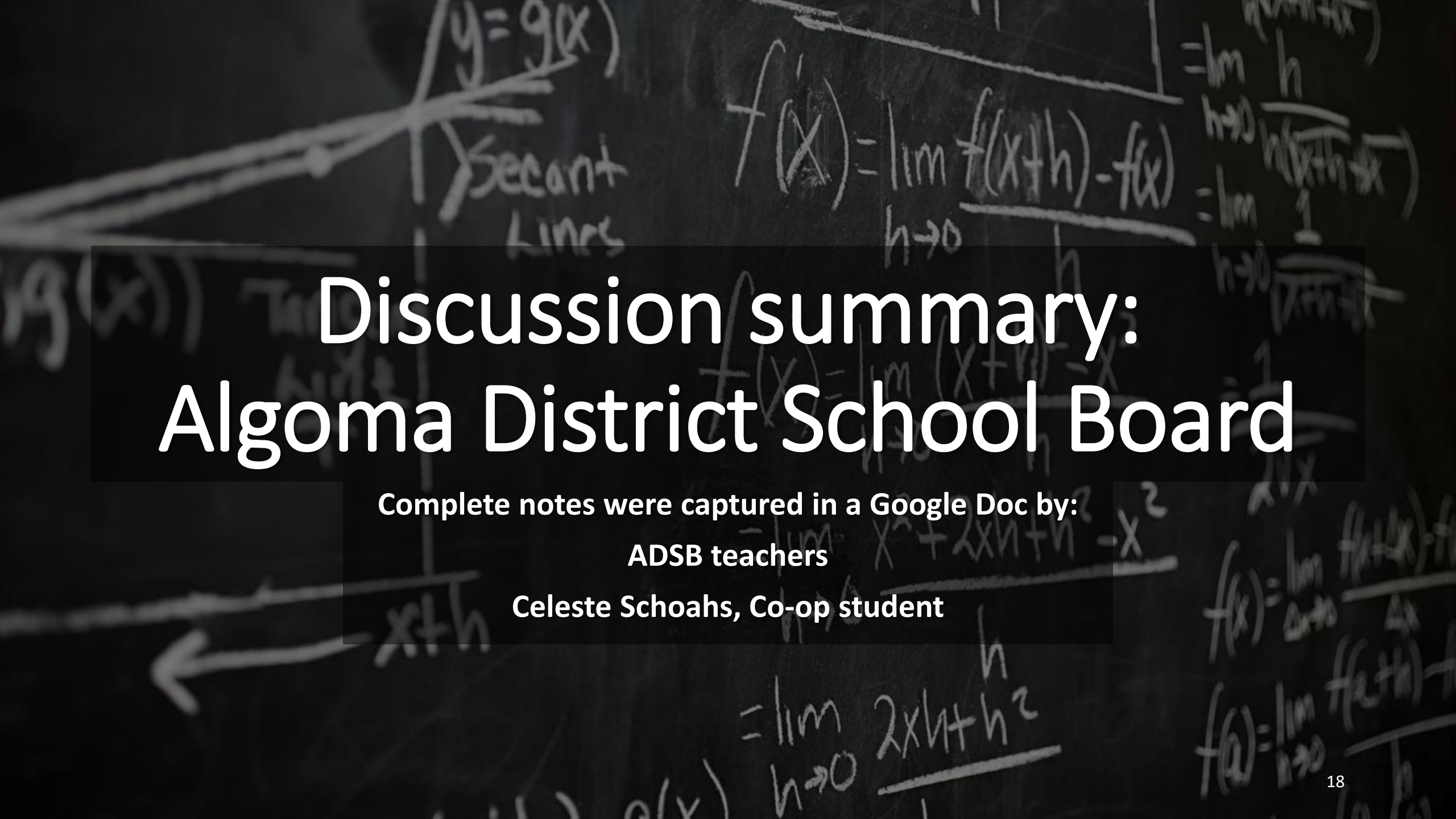
## Actions

- In addition to the current scope of ECCC, we need an upstream solution to water issues
- Immediate actions (not for “future”) - better voice for First Nations/Indigenous persons
  - Also, address gap of local CA
- Educate/improve awareness of local issues (e.g., benzene, PFOS - Perfluorooctane sulfonate) and making the connections between what we do and what happens after
- More information to community members (enable participation)
- Tightening up our many networks to ensure efficiencies and coordination among those who do work in the fresh water space in whatever capacity/sector
- Engaging with local businesses – often a sector not well engaged; at the same time, have the discussion as to whether some of these activities (business or otherwise) should continue, or if alternatives can be found
- Long-term studies on the effects of hydro dams, other issues
- Locals know local issues – make space and provide enabling conditions/empowerment for their participation
- Intergenerational approach to engagement, also different groups (e.g., local rec groups, enthusiasts)
- Not just watershed management/study, but aquifer health and monitoring

## Future state

- Some upstream ‘prevention’ strategy for transformations that prevent the impacts from happening → address root problems
- Plenty of rural households and local industries
- Awareness of impacts on our water supplies
- It would be wonderful if all of Canada could have the clean and fresh water that we have here in Algoma which might mean mitigation priorities and reduction of pollution issues. I feel that this needs to be a short term goal so 2025 -2030 would be a time frame. This is my vision because clean water should not be a privilege - especially in Canada. Clean water everywhere and protected
- Clean, and cleaner water into the future, no further demise → clean = potable with little remediation (drinkable), also not human-centric (e.g., healthy wildlife and fish)
  - Drinking water for ALL across Canada
- Quantity/abundance → recreation, industry → but not too much (inundating agriculture)
- Groundwater → sufficient quantity and quality for wells
- Reduce/prevent further Perfluorooctane sulfonate issues in the Great Lakes
- Edible fishes
- Understanding of water systems within the context of broader issues like climate change (this is inevitably going to be a focus)

# General online (Dec 11 from 11-1)

The background is a chalkboard filled with mathematical content. At the top left, there is a graph of a parabola with the equation  $y = 9(x)$  and a secant line drawn through it, labeled "Secant Lines". In the center, the definition of a derivative is written:  $f'(x) = \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{f(x+h) - f(x)}{h}$ . To the right, there are more complex limit expressions involving  $h$  and  $x$ . At the bottom, there is a diagram showing a point  $x+h$  on a number line with an arrow pointing left, and a corresponding algebraic expansion:  $= \lim_{h \rightarrow 0} \frac{2xh + h^2}{h}$ .

# Discussion summary: Algoma District School Board

Complete notes were captured in a Google Doc by:

ADSB teachers

Celeste Schoahs, Co-op student

# Morning session summary

- **A water secure future for everyone includes:** safe, clean water for all for many uses; legal personhood for water; accountability for big polluters; no private rights to water; comprehensive good governance over it (including honoring Indigenous treaties); healthy wildlife and ecosystems, technological innovations; protection for species and ecosystems (includes maintaining water table, preventing contamination – e.g., chloride).
- **The Sault is a great place because:** location in Canada and proximity to Great Lakes (and other waters); balance between city and rural perspectives; border town (collaboration); presence of industry that can ally in monitoring efforts; good fit for the key themes of the CWA (agriculture, climate change, Indigenous reconciliation); all four seasons with different climatic conditions and diverse ecosystems and potential study areas (e.g., the Sault locks); local knowledge capacity.
- **Final thoughts:** as Federal agencies are typically not implemented in smaller communities (especially in the North), the Sault provides a ‘neutral’ or new space for collaboration, negotiation, and policy process to take place – a space that can provide real opportunity to recognize and work with Indigenous nations across Canada; legacy and industrial pollution (mercury, sulphur, etc.) is part of our story – shape a narrative recognizing this.

# Afternoon session summary

- **A water secure future for everyone includes:** affordable and reliable access to clean, safe water for drinking and other uses (e.g., swimming, food production, diverse ecosystems); navigable waters; effective regulations and controls over quantity and quality; emergency response plans in place for water crises (e.g., flood, drought); honoring treaties with Indigenous nations and their perspectives and knowledge on/of water.
- **The Sault is a great place because:** proximity to the Great Lakes, including Superior as the headwaters of the entire Great Lakes basin; hub of water transportation; border community (collaboration); many Indigenous nations here; Bawating – “meeting place” at the heart of Turtle Island (historical and cultural significance); innovative industry; much research, education, and general science-policy capacity.
- **Final thoughts:** important to have a central (coordinating) vision that recognizes the unique approaches needed across the country; must recognize (e.g., funding to) Indigenous nations as leaders in this space.

# Special thanks to ADSB teachers...

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## **Morning session**

Ms. Pelland – 19 students

Ms. Willoughby – 28 students

Ms. Keranen – 19 students

Ms. Maclachlan – 20 students

## **Afternoon session**

Ms. Caputo – 12 students

Ms. Pelland – 19 students

Ms. Reiter – 16 students

Ms. MacLachlan – 3 students

And a very special thank you to Sarah Constable, Leader of Experiential Learning at ADSB, who reached out to the teachers on our behalf and who coordinated the logistics of these meetings



# Written comments



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Contributions sent via  
email or Zoho form

# Comment 1

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When reviewing this water project, we believe that existing waterways/ streams near the city should be looked at for cleanup and extend the life of the waterway by reducing the weed growth. This includes East and West and North of the city. (and we do not mean within the city limits) This would create a substantial work force badly needed.

Trusting you will consider.

# Comment 2

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Given that the federal government itself acknowledges that 1/4 of all Canadians draw their drinking water from the Great Lakes, and given the Soo straddles Superior and Huron, it seems a very good fit that the Canada Water Agency would be located here. Indigenous people have used these waterways and surrounding areas, including the St Mary's River -- Bawating -- as a thoroughfare, meeting place and source of life. The threats to our water include industry, invasive species, agricultural run-off, and climate change. The presence of Algoma University, Sault College, OFRI, MNR offices, Sea Lamprey Control Centre and the abundance of well qualified and passionate scientists, indigenous leaders and a knowledgeable and concerned general public -- all make Sault Ste Marie an ideal community in which to house the future Water Agency.



# Comment 3

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After a summer of smoke and smoking hot temperatures, extreme rain events and all of the climate change-driven weather of 2021, Sault Ste. Marie is beginning to look like it will be a refuge with all of its clean water and green spaces. Our geographic position between Lake Superior and Lake Huron makes Sault Ste. Marie the logical place to house the Canada Water Agency. Entrepreneurs as far back as the 19th Century recognized that Sault Ste. Marie was the perfect place to develop water-intensive industries like steel-making and paper-making. Unfortunately, after 100 years of pollution dumped directly into the St. Marys River, our community learned a hard lesson about how important it is to keep our precious water clean. The St. Marys River became one of 43 Areas of Concern due to pollution, habitat destruction and impairment of our fisheries. I have watched as attitudes in our community have changed from carelessness about our environment to a growing recognition of how important our clean water is for life now and in the future. There is growing debate in our community about the need to locate polluting industries like a proposed ferro-chrome smelter which would add to cumulative impacts of industrial pollution in Sault Ste. Marie. Much better to grow our community by showing the world how people in Sault Ste. Marie value clean water and can contribute to conserving, preserving and appreciating clean water by locating the Canada Water Agency here.

# Comment 4

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Water Agency should concentrate on these research topics:

- Nutrient Pollution - significantly degrading water quality
- Climate Change Impacts - changing weather patterns will have great effects
- Chemical Contaminants - including plastics
- Invasive Species - major impacts on Great Lakes already
- Biodiversity
- Healthy Soils - soil erosion may be a greater world wide problem than climate change - degrades water quality
- SOCIAL SCIENCES: The disconnect between knowing there is a water quality problem, the solutions are known - but choosing not to take action.
- POLITICAL SCIENCES
  - Liberal societies - pursuit of happiness - but not at expense of community common good - that would account for how well the community / residents live up to their responsibilities to others and the common good when it comes to the environment.
  - ie: Its not because you have a "right" - it is also you have a responsibility to your community and others - the person reward is "community affirmation" not "happiness through excessive consumerism"

# Comment 5

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We are located in a strategic position to safe guard the water quality of the Great Lakes and  
Must take this seriously!

# Comment 6

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I am representing The SAULT NATURALIST OF ONTARIO and MICHIGAN as the chair of their Environmental Action Committee. We fully support the establishment of the Canada Water Agency in Sault Ste Marie. The city is located in Area of Concern on the Great Lakes and is actively implementing a Remedial Action Plan for the restoration of water quality in the St Marys River. The Turkey Lakes watershed north of the city is the longest monitored watershed in Canada. The Canadian Forestry Service and the Centre for Inland Waters have monitored nutrient and pollutant inputs and outputs for more than 40 years. This data has been used to develop international policy on Acid Rain in the past and will be critical to setting Climate Change Policies in the future. It makes more sense to enhance the capacity of the existing intellectual and infrastructure existing in Sault Ste Marie than to reinvent it elsewhere.

# Comment 7

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I am the chairman of the Big Basswood Lake Association and I am writing on behalf of the board of directors of our lake association.

Big Basswood Lake is a large freshwater lake (26.95 square KMs) located 106 KMs East of Sault Ste Marie, just North of Highway 17 between Thessalon and Iron Bridge. Big Basswood is a unique inland lake in that it is entirely spring fed and is, demonstrably, one of the clearest inland lakes in Ontario (Source – Federation of Ontario Cottagers Associations Lake Partner program). Protection and preservation of our lake's water quality is a primary mission of the Big Basswood Lake Association. Please see more information on our mission at [www.bigbasswood.ca](http://www.bigbasswood.ca).

Many of our association's initiatives include collaboration with local municipal authorities and provincial ministries to protect this unique resource. We believe that local federal representation in the form of an office of the Canadian Water Agency in Sault Ste Marie has the potential to increase the focus on the importance of freshwater resources such as Big Basswood.

We strongly support your initiative to bring the Canadian Water Agency to Sault Ste Marie. Please let us know if we can further support this project in any way.

# Comment 8

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I think it's a necessity that we have a Canada water agency, this land provides us with so much and we need to take care of it to maintain it for future generations.

# Comment 9

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Sault Ste Marie would be the perfect place for the Canada Water Agency considering the city is between two big Great Lakes and in close proximity to other large bodies of fresh water. We are also centrally located in the country. Our city needs help dealing with our own area of concern which is the St. Mary's River from Gros Cap bluffs down past St. Joseph Island.

The challenges the Great Lakes hold are possibly reflected in other fresh water lakes across the country. Findings and solutions could be shared with all Canadians as well as the United States.

# Comment 10 (note: we followed up with a call)

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*[Introductory information omitted – name, experience]*. Unfortunately I was not able to participate in the first two public forums due to scheduling conflicts but I have followed the process and I think the Sault would make an excellent location for the Canada Water Agency. I want to provide some Feedback to the CWA Project team.

I see an opportunity to future-proof the proposal by including technology (hardware, software and education) as part of resources we have available to us. I have not seen where the Internet-of-things (IOT) and its impact on the water industry has been included into the proposal and I believe not only is it necessary, but you cannot operate a water or wastewater plant or manage a treatment process or watershed without it. In the water space, in both the public and private sector, technology enables us to reach our performance goals and fiscal targets.

Being a leader of an Advanced Water Team in North America demonstrated to me where operations, research and education intersect and it is only made possible through technology. This is particularly critical with smaller communities, remote indigenous communities and industry where operational and educational excellence help drive the quality of the water we use and the quality of the water around us.

I believe by incorporating the water operations, satellite/mobile internet and online and in-class learning you would strengthen the proposal as you showcase the Sault's capabilities. We are not just our natural location but also our intrinsic technological capabilities which we have developed in part due to our general remoteness but also our ingenuity and resourcefulness.

I hope you find this helpful. It is something I feel strongly about because of my experience in this field in North America and Europe and I do think it is an equalizer with many of the larger Urban centres who will be competing for this agency. *[Omitted – offer to help further, invitation for a call]*. Water is Life.



# Further information from Commenter 10 (after phone call)

## **The importance of Technology for the future of water use, water treatment and water research and how Sault Ste. Marie can use it to its advantage in the pursuit of the Canadian Water Agency.**

Sault Ste. Marie is the nexus of Canada's water resources. Like much of Canada we are a small far-flung city, 300 km from a similarly sized neighbour. We are at once in the middle of Canada and yet connected to 6 provinces via the flow of water from Great Lakes to the gulf of St. Lawrence. Water's role in our history mirrors Canadian history, our indigenous roots, the fur trade, industrialization and water recreation. Sault Ste. Marie's relationship to water is a microcosm of Canada's. This relationship makes Sault Ste. Marie uniquely situated to host a new Canadian Water Agency.

The history of water is one of Mechanization. Think boats, pumps and dams. The future of water is technological, think data, communication and education. With the proliferation of the internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence, data management and remote communications a small somewhat remote city located in the centre of the Great Lakes can anchor the new Canadian Water Agency. We have a large educated professional, academic and technical workforce. Two post secondary education institutions with experience in networked learning, information sharing and process implementation. Sault Ste. Marie has significant experience utilizing outside resources to impact change and bring desired results to large projects. We also have ongoing relationships that provide these resources to others whether it be smaller regional communities or larger industrial or commercial endeavors. Sault Ste. Marie is also a leader in green energy which is important as we continue to create, build and analyze large data to better make decisions with regards to water use, treatment and management.

# Comment 11

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Congratulations for all of your hard work to put Sault Ste. Marie forward as the best location for the Canadian Water Agency. We are looking forward to positive news in the near future.

My daughter [*name removed*] has enjoyed a valuable student Co-op experience working with Dr. Ho-Tassone and I see first hand how this has shaped her decisions as she plans the start of her post-secondary education.

I see great potential for the Canadian Water Agency to collaborate with secondary schools across Algoma in the shared effort to retain trained, educated and committed youth. Korah and other high schools have specialized programs that already spotlight students motivated to learn about conservation, environmental science, community sustainability and Indigenous culture.

Secondary schools are a natural and important stakeholder in the Canadian Water Agency proposal. I see a number of co-beneficial streams and a planned partnership with secondary schools would be a strong supporter of Sault Ste. Marie's bid for the Water Agency.

Please feel free to contact me if specific support efforts would assist.

**We also  
acknowledge and  
thank those who  
provided  
feedback on the  
draft report**

- Joanie McGuffin
- David Thompson
- Jim Allen
- Sarah Constable
- Dr. Jody Rebek
- Tony Schoahs
- Margo Dale (who contributed 50+ pages of compiled photos, information, and reasons why the Sault is the best place for a CWA)



Thank you to all  
participants who  
contributed to the  
conversation!

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