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Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Executive Committee Supports the Advancement of Bill C-61 to Improve First Nations Access to Safe Drinking Water

(December 10, 2024 – Unceded Algonquin Territory, Ottawa, Ontario) — The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Executive Committee has unanimously passed a motion supporting the advancement of Bill C-61, *An Act respecting water, source water, drinking water, wastewater, and related infrastructure on First Nations lands*, into its third reading.

“As the AFN Executive Committee, we recognize that access to clean and safe drinking water and related infrastructure is a basic human right,” said AFN National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak. “This legislation is a necessary step toward addressing long-standing inequities. A tremendous amount of work has gone into this draft, and we urge the Government of Canada to prioritize the advancement of Bill C-61 without further delay.”

The AFN participated in the legislative process by submitting a brief to the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN) and [appearing before the committee on October 10, 2024, to propose amendments aligned with the direction as mandated by the First Nations-in-Assembly.](#)

“While we’ve made progress, such as the removal of the adjacency requirement for protection zones and the protection of First Nations from liability if Canada fails to make best efforts to provide adequate funding or access to water services on First Nations lands, there is more work to do,” said Ontario Regional Chief Abram Benedict. “Once the Bill proceeds to the Senate, the AFN Executive Committee is prepared to continue advocating to ensure a clear and sustained framework for First Nations to fully implement this legislation.”

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The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a national advocacy organization that works to advance the collective aspirations of First Nations individuals and communities across Canada on matters of national or international nature and concern.

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