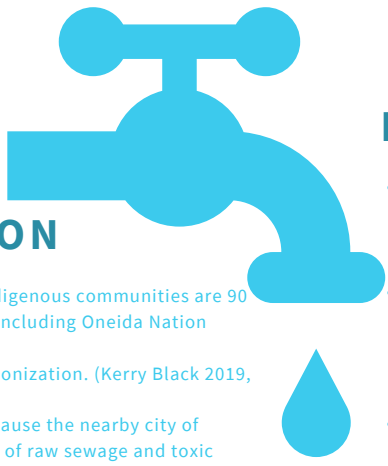


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## DESCRIPTION

- Although most Canadians have water security, Indigenous communities are 90 times more likely to experience water insecurity, including Oneida Nation (Declan Keogh 2019).
- Water insecurity is one of the many legacies of colonization. (Kerry Black 2019, 250)
- Oneida has not had water security since 2006, because the nearby city of London has dumped hundreds of millions of litres of raw sewage and toxic waste annually into their water source, the Thames River. (Declan Keogh 2019)
- Despite federal dedication to eliminating 'long term' boiled water advisories by 2021 (Declan Keogh 2019), Oneida's advisory is considered 'short term' despite existing informally for fourteen year, preventing access to the funding needed to resolve it. (Hessey 2019)

## PAST & PRESENT POLICIES

- Since the **Indian Act** (1876), reserves have received public service funding federally, which is substantially less than provincial funding for municipalities of the same sizes. This has resulted in worse water security, education, health care, etc. (Hessey 2019)
- Trudeau made a **federal promise** to eliminate long term Indigenous boil water advisories by March of 2021 with a budget of 1.9 billion. None of this has been allocated to Oneida as it is being unjustly called a 'short term' advisory since it was only formally acknowledged last year. (Declan Keogh 2019)
- **Indigenous Services Canada** is responsible for the quality of Indigenous drinking water, yet is denying the allegations of contamination and waterborne diseases in the Thames River, despite engineering reports empirically proving otherwise. (Declan Keogh 2019)
- There are **no municipal policies** to inform Oneida of upcoming toxic dumping and sewage overflows. (Declan Keogh 2019) There are also no policies to hold the city of London accountable for causing Oneida not to have water security since 2006. (Hanrahan 2017, 80)

# Indigenous Water Insecurity Accountability Pilot Project

Social Justice and Peace Studies Community Based Learning 3500, Chelsea Waserman, 250897255

## THESIS

*Water is a human right enshrined in Canadian and international law (Hanrahan 2017, 84) and there is a legal and moral responsibility to eliminate the local response gap causing Indigenous boiled water advisories to be unjustly overlooked. The city of London must be held accountable for contaminating the Thames River; which I propose should be done through a participatory board of Oneida community members who would strategize policies of accountability to prevent further contamination without repercussion.*

## ISSUE & LOCAL CONTEXT

- Water insecurity is a colonial legacy demonstrating how Canadian systems continue to devalue and exclude Indigenous communities and alter their cultures or traditional ways of life. (Hanrahan 2017, 81-83)
- There is no national, provincial or municipal policy of accountability to ensure the Indigenous right to water is met, although it is a legal right internationally and constitutionally (Hanrahan 2017, 80).
- There is government denial of the Oneida water crisis's severity and length. (Declan Keogh 2019) Since the advisory has only been official for a year despite its informal existence since 2006, it is brushed aside as a 'short term' advisory.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Indigenous Panel:** Canada needs an Indigenous led approach to water to ensure Indigenous water security. (Kerry Black 2017, 250). This pilot project is a municipal accountability measure operating from a trauma-informed, cultural safety perspective, using an independent Indigenous-led body which the municipality of London must consult to ensure the democratization and decolonization of water. If successful, this could serve as a municipal model to ensure Indigenous water security in communities contaminated by urban sewage across Canada. The panel may choose to suggest that: 1) London separate sewage plants from the Thames River (which is a work in progress), 2) A policy is created to ensure warnings before dumping toxins, 3) Funding from the city of London is provided as reparations for the damages.

