

SFU report urges drastic water conservation reforms

By Grace Scott October 5, 2011 12:00 pm

Canada needs to develop a new "water ethic" to deal with the detrimental impact climate change is having on Canada's water system, says a recent report out of Simon Fraser University.

The [report](#), created by the [Adaptation to Climate Change Team \(ACT\)](#), was spearheaded by Bob Sanford, the EPCOR chair of the Canadian Partnership in support of the United Nations "Water for Life" Decade.

It calls on politicians for serious and immediate policy changes that will implement water conservation efforts, as well as public awareness campaigning.

"The report outlines a new national proposition on water that aims to strengthen Canada's economy and ensure its environmental sustainability, while at the same time enhancing our nation's adaptive capacity in the face of growing climate change effects," Sanford said at a press conference Tuesday morning.

One of the principal findings, Sanford said, was that global warming is changing the way water moves through the hydrological cycle in many parts of Canada.

"We are beginning to experience deeper and more persistent droughts, and these are very costly," he said. "We're also beginning to experience the same intense rainfall and flooding events that are becoming more common widely elsewhere in the world."

He said these kind of weather events will likely become more and more frequent in Canada with the trend of global warming.

Sanford added that British Columbia is in trouble when it comes to water conservation. "You probably have problems you don't know you have yet," he said. "Most of the water legislation you have is from the 19th century."

He discussed issues related to ground water legislation as well as infrastructure; for example, the need for Metro Vancouver to implement water meters.

Sanford cited recent policy reforms in the Northwest Territories toward water conservation legislation as a sign that although water conservation may be drastic in expense and planning, it's possible. "We don't have to go to bed wringing our hands and fearing the future. We can do this," he said.

Sanford will be taking his report on a 16-city tour across Canada and will be meeting with members of different levels of government along the way. After that, he hopes to take the report to Ottawa.

Grace Scott is completing a practicum at The Tyee.

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