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Climate Change Threatens Canada's Water: Report

Tuesday, October 04, 2011 4:36 PM

Coordinated Water Conservation Guidelines Needed To Protect Canada's Water System

VANCOUVER, Oct. 4, 2011 /CNW/ - Federal, provincial and municipal governments should implement coordinated national and regional water conservation guidelines to address the detrimental impact climate change is having on [Canada's](#) water system, according to a new report from ACT, Simon Fraser University's Adaptation to Climate Change Team.

"The days when Canadians take an endless abundance of fresh water for granted are numbered," warns Bob Sandford, lead author of ACT's *Climate Change Adaptation and Water Governance* report. "Increasing average temperatures, climate change impacts on weather patterns and extensive changes in land use are seriously affecting the way water moves through the hydrological cycle in many parts of Canada, which is seriously impacting water quantity and quality."

"If Canada doesn't become a water conservation society, water security in many parts of this country will be compromised."

The report calls for a dramatic reform of water governance structures in Canada by all levels of government to meet the new challenges posed by a changing climate, and sets out twelve broad-based recommendations to help protect Canada's fragile water supply.

Climate change is causing increased weather instability, leading to more frequent, deeper and persistent droughts as well as more intense rainfall and flooding across Canada resulting in greater property damage, higher insurance costs and a greater infrastructure maintenance and replacement deficit nationally.

Today, half of every dollar paid out by insurance companies is for water damage related to extreme weather events, which will continue to increase unless government and planners undertake the deep reforms necessary to manage water differently.

The growing economic impacts of climate change on Canada were confirmed by a national study released last week by the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE). According to the NRTEE, the costs of climate change could range from \$5 billion per year in 2020 to between \$21 billion and \$43 billion per year in 2050, depending on global [greenhouse gas emissions](#) and domestic economic and population growth.

"Canada is coping with climate change, not adapting," says Sandford. "Our primary response to climate change has been focussed on reducing emissions. While such action is critical, it is inadequate by itself. Current and projected atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases will result in continued climate change regardless of our success in reducing emissions.

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