**DO NOT ATTACH BACKGROUND DOCUMENT WHEN USING THIS LETTER. IT CONTAINS ALL THE INFORMATION IN THE BACKGROUND DOCUMENT, AS IS MEANT TO BE STAND-ALONE.**

**Sections highlighted in red require you to add in local information.**

CLUB LETTERHEAD

DATE

FOR A LOCAL MEMBER WHO IS NOT A CABINET MINISTER[Name of Member], M.P.,[riding]

FOR A LOCAL MEMBER WHO IS A CABINET MINISTER, The Honourable [name], M.P.,[riding]  
House of Commons   
Ottawa, Ontario   
K1A 0A6

Re: Right to Safe, Clean, Accessible and Affordable Drinking Water and Sanitation on First Nation Reserves in Canada

Dear [Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_] / FOR A LOCAL MEMBER WHO IS A CABINET MINISTER: Dear Minister \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing on behalf of [CFUW/UWC Club name], [with more than \_\_\_ members in name of town/city]. We are an affiliate of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW), a non-partisan, self-funded organization comprised of 100 CFUW Clubs, located in every province across Canada. Since its founding in 1919, CFUW has worked to improve the status of women, and to promote human rights, public education, social justice, and peace.  CFUW, with its member Clubs, awards annually over $1M in scholarships, bursaries and fellowships to help women and girls pursue post-secondary education. We hold special consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC) and belong to the Education Committee of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

At our 2017 Annual General Meeting, our voting body adopted policy on the **Right to Safe, Clean, Accessible and Affordable Drinking Water and Sanitation on First Nation Reserves in Canada.**

*We urge the Federal, Provincial and Territorial governments of Canada to work collaboratively and expeditiously with First Nations to secure access to safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all residents of all First Nations Reserves and Communities; and*

*We urge you to work collaboratively with First Nations to develop inclusive national water standards as well as five-year and ten-year plans of action to ensure the funds allocated are adequate and utilized for sustainable solutions, including appropriate training and certification of Reserve and Community residents to ensure regular monitoring and maintenance.*

Although most municipal water systems in Canadian towns and cities deliver safe, clean, frequently-tested drinking water and sanitation services, the rural communities who lack these services are predominantly on First Nations reserves. Despite ongoing efforts, families on reserves experience disease and health problems attributable to poor water and sanitation.

On many First Nations reserves and communities, Drinking Water Advisories (DWA) have been in place for years, sometimes decades. For example, on July 31, 2017, there were 102 long-term DWAs and 48 short-term DWAs in 101 First Nations communities south of the 60th parallel, excluding British Columbia and the 7 Nations of the Saskatoon Tribal Council. Concurrently, there were 22 DWAs in 20 First Nation communities in British Columbia. In fact, two-thirds of **ALL** First Nation communities in Canada have been under at least one DWA at some time in the last decade.

Delivering quality water and wastewater systems to Reserves and Communities is fraught with jurisdictional difficulties involving Chief and Council, INAC, Health Canada, Environment Canada, and the provinces and territories.

* First Nations communities south of the 60th parallel (excluding British Columbia) share responsibility for safe drinking water on reserves with the Government of Canada.
* Territorial governments are responsible for safe drinking water in all communities in their territories, including First Nations and Inuit communities.
* Provincial and territorial regulations protecting the health of most Canadians by governing safe drinking water and sanitation do not extend to First Nations reserves.
* Because watersheds extend outside reserves, source water protection falls under provincial law, making it legally and logistically difficult for First Nations to engage on the issue.

We applaud the Federal Government’s continued investments in housing, clean water access, health facilities and community infrastructure, including on-reserve water and wastewater infrastructure, proper facility operation, maintenance, and the training of water system operators. However, in the absence of enforceable regulations and guaranteed long-term funding, these investments will be ineffective in solving the drinking water crisis for First Nations communities.

Access to safe, affordable, and clean water is an internationally recognized human right. We call on your government to show leadership by fully implementing the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly Article 19, and to fulfil Canada’s commitment to ensure the UN recognized Human Right to safe drinking water and sanitation, which Canada wholly endorsed. Ending DWAs on First Nation reserves is critical to fulfilling this commitment and helping to establish Canada’s leadership on Indigenous issues.

CFUW [INSERT CLUB NAME] calls on the government to support First Nations-led approaches and leadership in resolving water-related issues. To ensure Canada’s First Nations no longer live in third world conditions, we urge the government:

1. To develop enforceable drinking water and sanitation regulations in close collaboration with First Nations, and
2. Provide long-terms, sustained investments in water treatment and sanitation facility infrastructure, operations, management and maintenance.

Yours sincerely,

[CLUB PRESIDENT SIGNATURE]

NAME OF PRESIDENT

CLUB NAME