



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **AMC calls for the protection of shared water resources on UN World Water Day 2021**

**Treaty One Territory, Manitoba** – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) issues this statement on International World Water Day March 22, 2021 as designated by the United Nations with the theme of “valuing water.”

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas stated, “Our Treaty lands in Manitoba are home to some of the cleanest rivers in the world. Manitoba has some of the largest freshwater lakes with our ancestral rivers being the trading networks for the fur trade historically. First Nations protect water as sacred and central to life and sustenance. The great northern rivers continue to drive the hydro electric generators that power Manitoba’s economy. On Water Day 2021, I reaffirm First Nations’ strategic and political efforts to protect our most important resource from further degradation and commit to working to ensure that the untouched rivers that flow throughout Northern Manitoba remain in their pristine state. First Nations continue to uphold their part of the Treaty agreements to share the lands and waters. As stewards of the lands and water, we continue to ensure that our sacred water resources remain clean and available to for children’s children.”

Grand Chief Dumas added, “Our water resources in Manitoba, unfortunately, are neglected and have been mistreated over several decades as part of economic development. Hydroelectric development has flooded our hunting and sacred ceremonial lands, the Churchill River diversion has devastated First Nations economies and livelihoods and Manitoba Hydro’s regulation of Lake Winnipeg water levels continues to have damaging environmental effects on the shoreline and fish habitats. Lake Winnipeg continues to be used a sewage repository for the City of Winnipeg, chemical run off from industrial scale farming continues to end up in Lake Winnipeg and invasive species have threatened the local fish and wildlife. All of this has made for a very unhealthy lake and has threatened the sustainability of the freshwater fishing industry, an industry that is the central economic engine of many First Nations.”

“In addition to the large scale industrial effects on the rivers and lakes, First Nations continue to be under short and long terms boil water advisories. First Nations welcome the new funding recently announced by Infrastructure Minister McKenna for First Nations water projects and for upgrading water infrastructure on-reserve. However, the overall gap in infrastructure is in the several billions of dollars: a number that far exceeds allotments to date. I urge the federal government to consult and collaborate with the First Nations in Manitoba on an environmental and sustainability strategy for protecting our shared water resources for now and for future generations. I also urge the federal government to support the direction of the AMC leadership for the development of First Nations Water and Infrastructure Authority. With this support and collaboration we can all demonstrate how we all value water today and for generations to come.”

**For more information, please contact:**

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**About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs**

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Ininew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.