

Press Release

**FIRST NATIONS FIGHT CANADA IN COURT THIS WEEK
OVER RIGHT TO SAFE DRINKING WATER**

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7 – OTTAWA – Today Shamattawa First Nation and Chief Jordna Hill are in court against the Government of Canada over the right to safe drinking water on reserve. Justice Paul Favel of the Federal Court will determine the plaintiff's summary judgment motion on whether Canada owes a duty or obligation to provide First Nations and their members with safe drinking water.

The court hearing is occurring in Ottawa from October 7-9, 2024, beginning at 9:30 EDT each day. Media are invited to watch the hearing online at the following link:

<https://cas-satj.zoom.us/j/69129996375?pwd=2c588G7i37iTbFaNtAaPO0vKspsV9p.1>
Passcode: 750432

The national class action lawsuit captures an estimated 70,000 members of First Nations living on reserve under a long-term drinking water advisory since June 2021. Shamattawa First Nation is joined by some fifty-nine First Nations that have opted-in to the class action and will be bound by the outcome of the summary judgment motion.

The class action alleges that Canada has breached its obligations to First Nations and their members by failing to ensure that First Nations have access to safe and reliable drinking water on reserve. Canada is alleged to have been negligent, breached its fiduciary duties, breached the honour of the Crown, and breached the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The class action seeks compensation, as well as a court order that the federal government comply with its obligation to provide safe and reliable access to drinking water on reserve by (1) funding the actual cost of appropriate water systems on reserve; and (2) funding the actual cost of operations and maintenance of water systems on reserve.

Shamattawa First Nation's case is supported by reports from several experts, including leaders in the fields of engineering, medicine, history, and economics. These experts speak to the way that the federal government has caused and perpetuated the water crisis on reserve, as well as the adverse consequences for the health and wellbeing of First Nations and their members.

The plaintiffs' Statement of Claim can be found [here](#). The federal government's Statement of Defence can be found [here](#).

Contact

Shamattawa First Nation is represented by McCarthy Tétrault LLP and Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP.

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