



July 9, 2009

Dear Council of Canadians member,

The City of Winnipeg is rushing through a proposal that will change the way water and waste water services are managed. The Council of Canadians, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the University of Winnipeg Students Association and several other groups have joined forces under the banner of a Water Watch Winnipeg to prevent the devolution of Winnipeg's water services.

On **July 15**, the Executive Policy Committee of the City of Winnipeg will be voting on the proposal to form an arm's-length Municipal Corporate Utility to manage Winnipeg's water and waste water. Once the EPC passes the motion, there will be a vote by the City Council on July 22.

The corporatization of Winnipeg's water utility will allow for greater privatization of public services and prevent our elected representatives from making decisions in the public interest. Experiences in other cities like Edmonton have shown that corporate utilities whose primary function is to make profits can lead to the sale of public assets, a loss of public control and transparency, rate hikes and lower quality services.

The city is attempting to rush the deal through without adequately informing and consulting the public.

There are many unanswered questions and contradictions in the proposal that is before Winnipeg City Council. The Mayor claims the corporate utility will be city-controlled, yet it will be run by an unelected board of directors with limited input from elected officials.

What you can do:

1. Phone 311 and ask to speak to your city councillor.
2. Express your concerns at the EPC meeting on July 15, 9:00am: 2nd floor City Hall, 510 Main St
3. Show your opposition to the commercialization of the Winnipeg water utility by attending the July 22, 9:30am: main council chamber, 510 Main St.

Sample phone message to your city councillor:

I am calling to ask you to support a motion to defer the decision on the corporatization of Winnipeg's water and waste utility. Recent media reports show that the public is concerned about the loss of public control over Winnipeg's water utility and feel that they have not adequately been consulted on the issue. There are many unanswered questions and contradictions in the proposal being put forward. Commercialization in other cities has paved the way for public-private partnerships and outright privatization to the detriment of the public interest. I urge you to support a motion to defer this decision until there is an opportunity for Winnipeggers to be fully informed and meaningfully consulted on this vital issue.

Thank you for taking the time to help protect Winnipeg's public water and waste services. For more information, please phone: 1-866-378-7427 or email us at inquiries@canadians.org

Sincerely,

Meera Karunanathan, national water campaigner for the Council of Canadians
Michael Welch, Winnipeg chapter of the Council of Canadians