



## OFFICE OF THE CHIEF AND COUNCIL

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# **NESKANTAGA FIRST NATION MARKS 30 YEARS UNDER CANADA'S LONGEST BOIL WATER ADVISORY**

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NESKANTAGA FIRST NATION, ON** – February 1, 2025, marks a grim milestone for Neskantaga First Nation: 30 years living under a boil water advisory. For three decades, residents of Neskantaga, a remote First Nation 430 kilometres northeast of Thunder Bay, have been forced to live without safe drinking water—a fundamental human right that continues to elude us.

Neskantaga First Nation has endured the hardships of unsafe and undrinkable water, with our members forced to rely on bottled or boiled water for drinking, cooking, and hygiene for thirty years now. We have witnessed generation after generation grow up under this preventable hardship.

“We should not be marking a 30th anniversary of this crisis,” said Neskantaga First Nation Chief Chris Moonias. “Our people have endured this long enough. Safe drinking water is a basic human right. It is unconscionable that we are still here today, 30 years later, facing this same struggle.”

In the past 30 years, Neskantaga First Nation has seen multiple attempts to resolve our boil water advisory, but these efforts have yet to result in a permanent solution. As the community reflects on this milestone, we continue to feel the emotional, social, and health-related consequences of living with unsafe water for such an extended period.

The anniversary serves as a stark reminder of the persistence of water insecurity faced many Indigenous communities across Canada, underscoring the need for continued attention to this issue and the importance of ensuring access to safe drinking water for all communities.

In 2016, then Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations Carolyn Bennett visited Neskantaga First Nation and promised the community would have safe drinking water by the spring of 2018. However, that deadline has come and gone without meaningful progress for Neskantaga and countless other communities still waiting for safe water.

In light of the upcoming federal election, Neskantaga First Nation calls on the next Prime Minister to take decisive steps to resolve this crisis that’s gone on for far too long. In 2023, Bill C-61, the First Nations Clean Water Act was proposed to set national standards on water. “We were disappointed that Bill C-61 didn’t get passed due to partisan politics. This is about more than just water – it’s about dignity and basic human rights, it feels like Neskantaga First Nation doesn’t deserve clean drinking water,” added Chief Moonias. “We will not wait another 30 years. A solution is needed now.”