

Nothing Sacred – The Growing Threat to Water and Indigenous Peoples

Water is life. It is our greatest gift from the earth. We celebrate it in our families, in our communities, and in our daily lives. Water is one of the foundations of our traditions and our survival as peoples.

Today, we see all around us that water is threatened. It is being polluted, depleted and given to corporations to quench an insatiable thirst for profits.

Indigenous peoples often bear the greatest impacts of global development and pressures on water. People in the developing world make up 75% of those without enough water and they will make up 90% of those suffering by 2025.

For decades governments and business have been anticipating this crisis and planning incredible schemes to profit from it. One water export licence that was granted in British Columbia would have shipped to California the same amount of water Vancouver uses in one year.

As indigenous peoples we have collective proprietary interests in our traditional territories and rights stemming from our use and possession of the land since time immemorial. Yet these rights are not a priority for the Canadian government which has signed international trade agreements that do not recognize our title and rights to resources and the protection of our culture.

These agreements and the idea that everything should be for sale to the highest bidder not only threaten our rights but deny the sacred nature of water – that it is given to us by the Creator and the Earth. This is the basis of our traditions and beliefs.

Together we must protect our title and the rights of all human beings.

Without a new way – one in which our traditions can play a leading role – the earth will not survive.