

## NEWS RELEASE



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### **Laurier hosts speaking tour urging policy makers to embrace water protection**

WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University is hosting The Forum for Leadership on Water (FLOW) on Tuesday, Oct. 25 as part of FLOW's "Northern Voices, Southern Choices: Water Policy Lessons for Canada" cross-country tour. During the event, Bob Sandford, a leading water expert, will discuss the need for significant water policy reform.

"The days when Canadians take an abundance of fresh water for granted are numbered," warns Sandford, who is the EPCOR Chair of the Canadian Partnership Initiative in support of the United Nations "Water for Life" decade. "Increasing average temperatures, climate change impacts on weather patterns and extensive changes in land use are causing incalculable damage to public infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, and seriously impacting water quantity and quality."

Sandford emphasizes that floods and water damage caused by climate change will cost governments billions of dollars and threaten economic growth unless significant water policy reform is adopted.

"Governments need a Canada-wide strategy that effectively addresses current and emerging threats to freshwater security," said Sandford. "We have seen what elements of such a strategy could look like thanks to leadership from the Northwest Territories, but other jurisdictions have to act now."

FLOW is a national collaborative of water experts that encourages government action to protect critical fresh water resources. The group's cross-Canada tour, which began in early October and runs to the end of November, aims to demonstrate the need to better prepare for climate change, increase civic engagement and think more strategically about water management.

Deb MacLatchy, Laurier's vice-president: academic and provost and an aquatic toxicologist, will open the Oct. 25 forum. The panel also includes Stephen Kakfwi, former Northwest Territories premier; David Livingstone, former director, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; and Chris Burn, NSERC Northern Research Chair, Carleton University.

Laurier and the government of the Northwest Territories signed a 10-year partnership agreement in May, 2010 to collaborate on research and training on climate change and water resource protection. The partnership supports the goals of the NWT Water Stewardship Strategy to ensure that the water of the NWT "remains clean, abundant and productive for all time."

Laurier hosts the Institute for Water Science and Cold Regions Research Centre – multi-disciplinary research institutes that focus on cold regions and water science research, including public policy and management.

The event takes place Thursday, Oct. 25 from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Paul Martin Centre on Laurier's Waterloo campus. FLOW's tour is primarily funded by the RBC Blue Water Project.