

Why is this important to members of the public?

When local governments contract out or privatize public services, everyone is affected. While some may think a corporate Utility is not a bad idea, they are not aware of the consequence of opening the door to privatization. This new utility and its strategic partnership generate a number of concerns:

- **Accountability related to rate increases and management of the utility services**

An arms-length corporation would limit the ability of elected representatives to oversee operations and make decisions in the public interest. Therefore, the price for water and sewer services may substantially increase as a result of the move to a utility.

- **Responsibility for water quality, pollution standards and public health**

Putting water and wastewater in the hands of private companies can lead to problems with water quality and waste water control. In one city for example, a private company refused to take responsibility for a sewage spill.

- **Loss of political control over a vital public service**

Once a corporation has a stake in a public service or in building public infrastructure, they can hide costs and avoid blame when things go wrong. They take advantage of tax loopholes and legal contracts to protect their profits, all at a cost to taxpayers.

Basically private companies need to make a profit and must put their shareholders ahead of public stakeholders. Protection of the public and the environment is not their concern.

PEOPLE TAKE POLITICAL ACTION TO PROTECT PUBLIC WATER

A coalition of community, student, faith, environment and union groups are campaigning to protect public water. These groups were very critical of the City's lack of consultation and communication with the public. They believe in public services.

They are educating the public about the dangers of privatizing water and lobbying politicians to keep water a public resource.

SPEAK OUT!

We are encouraging everyone to speak out about the importance of public water: **You can:**

- contact your MLA to express your concerns about the Utility,
- share this brochure with people in your workplace, your family and your friends.

STAY INFORMED!

Sign-up for email updates and stay informed about action taking place to keep water public. It's easy to join. Go to www.cupe500.mb.ca and click on the "sign-up" button.

For more information/resources about water visit:

Council of Canadians: www.canadians.org/water/

Canadian Union of Public Employees: www.cupe.ca/water

Polaris Institute: www.polarisinstitute.org/

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*Winnipeg's Water Utility
could lead to
privatization*

positively
Public
the Winnipeg Way!



CUPE Members Care about Public Water



QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES MATTER

Quality public services are the building blocks for strong and healthy communities.

Winnipeg's water and wastewater treatment is currently operated as a high quality public service. Everyday, CUPE members in the Water and Waste Department provide the skilled attention needed for high quality and accessible public water. They make sure the water from our tap is pure and safe.

CITY APPROVES MUNICIPAL CORPORATE UTILITY

In July 2009, Winnipeg City Council voted to create a Municipal Corporate Utility to operate city water and wastewater services. They will use a 'strategic partner' or business method (public-private partnership) to "design, construct, finance and operate" water and waste control centres.

This decision could lead to privatizing City wastewater services. If private companies operate public services, they tend to be less accountable to public needs. In other cities where this approach has been used, costs have risen and quality of service has declined.

HOW COUNCIL VOTED

Though most people in Winnipeg thought the City should delay setting up the Utility, City Council went ahead with a vote of 10-6 in favour of the proposed model. They did not seriously consult the public nor did they listen to the many people, including representatives from Local 500, who spoke at City Hall.

The Councillors who voted in favour of the motion were: Jeff Browaty, Bill Clement, Scott Fielding, Harry Lazarenko, Grant Nordmen, Mike O' Shaughnessy, Mike Pagtakhan, Gord Steves, Justin Swandel, and Mayor Sam Katz.

City Councillors who voted against the motion were: Jenny Gerbasi, Dan Vandal, Harvey Smith, Lillian Thomas, Russ Wyatt and John Orlikow.

PRIVATIZATION IS NOT THE ANSWER

Privatization of our water and wastewater in any form is not the answer. Water and wastewater services and infrastructure must be publicly financed and delivered. Private companies can design and construct infrastructure, but we, city workers, are good at the rest.

**QUALITY
PUBLIC
SERVICES**

**Public Water & Sewer Services
Safe • Reliable • Affordable**