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Water issues discussed at MNL meeting



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The opening of Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador's western sessions started rather fluidly with a discussion on the province's water facilities.

Representatives of the Environmental Policy Institute at Grenfell Campus delivered the results of an ongoing survey of water operators from across the province. The survey shows that there aren't as many complaints as there could be, but some did come to light during discussion periods.

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Researcher Alice Will of the Environmental Policy Institute at Grenfell Campus delivers the results of a survey on drinking water resources.

Municipal representatives who gathered at the Deer Lake Motel for the western sessions complained of boil orders and long wait times from the province to clear the towns' individual water sources after issues had been addressed.

Institute researcher and presenter Alice Will said the survey is ongoing, with a final deadline of March 7.

Research shows that about 15 per cent of west coast towns have had 10 or more boil orders in the last four years.

Steady Brook Mayor Peter Rowsell said those frustrations lead to residents taking their frustrations out on the wrong people.

"When there's a problem with the water and there's a boil order, it goes into effect and it might

be fixed two days later,” Rowsell said to the crowd.

“But then it takes three and a half weeks for the province to clear it and people don’t get angry with the province, they get angry with us, the people they can see.”

Leona Gillette, also a Steady Brook representative, agreed.

“I believe we have two water testers for the whole west coast, and that’s just not enough,” she said. “We need more here.”

So far, the survey only has about a 19 per cent response. It covers items like source quality, training, infrastructure and funding applications

Others in attendance discussed water reservoirs going dry, being dependent upon other water facilities and unwanted structures polluting water supplies. Gillette said, for example, that cabins near her town have the potential to pollute Steady Brook’s water supply.

The western sessions of the MNL will continue into Saturday.

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