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# Slate Falls Celebrates Grand Opening of Water Treatment Plant

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**SLATE FALLS** – Today, Bob Nault, Member of Parliament (Kenora riding), along with the Honourable Jane Philpott, Minister of Indigenous Services, attended the Grand Opening of the Water Treatment Plant in Slate Falls First Nation.

“Today marks another milestone; another long-term drinking water advisory is lifted in Northwestern Ontario,” stated Nault. “After 14 long years, the residents of Slate Falls First Nation can now safely drink the water from their taps, thanks to the new water treatment plant.”

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler joined Slate Falls Nation Chief Lorraine Crane and representatives of the federal and provincial governments to celebrate the opening of the community’s new water treatment plant today.

“Slate Falls has struggled for 12 years to secure this project that will finally provide safe, reliable supplies of drinking water and I acknowledge the determination of Chief and Council to make this project a reality,” said Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler. “This vital infrastructure investment has eliminated 11 drinking water advisories in NAN and shows that the federal government is serious about fulfilling its commitment to end all water advisories in First Nation communities. We are pleased to celebrate this milestone and look for continued investments from the federal government for infrastructure projects to ensure that all First Nations in NAN territory have access to safe drinking water.”

The community, under long-term drinking water advisories (LTDWA) since 2004, had their 11 advisories lifted on February 5, 2018, after final testing was completed earlier this year.

Indigenous Services Canada invested more than \$11.6 million for the new water treatment plant that will provide clean, dependable drinking water to all residents, the Bimaychikamah Elementary School, and other community buildings including the health centre, nurses’ residence, the Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service building, and the First Nation’s administration building. The water investments also enhance the community’s fire protection capacity through the installation of additional fire hydrants and pumps.

“Behind the lifting of each long-term drinking water advisory is the hard work and dedication of numerous people. To Chief Lorraine Crane and the Slate Falls council, as well as Windigo Tribal Council: congratulations on a job well done,” concluded Nault. “Each member of the community will be positively impacted by this initiative and we are one step closer to a happier, healthier community.”

Federal funding for the \$11.6 million-dollar project was announced in July 2016. The project will provide safe drinking water to all residences and buildings in the community. It also includes firefighting infrastructure such as water pumps and hydrants.

Until now, water in Slate Falls has been distributed by 11 pump houses, built in 1998. All of these pump houses have been under a drinking water advisory (DWA) since 2004.

Located approximately 550 kilometres north of Thunder Bay, Slate Falls represents about 30 percent of DWAs in NAN First Nations, 14 percent of DWAs in Ontario, and 8 percent of DWAs in First Nations across Canada.

Currently, there are 17 DWAs across in First Nations across NAN territory.

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