

Tools for Action

Stay in close touch with service users. For this campaign that includes everyone, from the general public to students to young mothers to seniors.

Reach out to new allies including First Nations communities, people of colour, farmers and public health officials.

Remember, coalition work is built on communication. We all have to give and take. The broader the coalition, the stronger the need to recognize the principles behind this campaign. Give a copy of the Statement of Principles to any group interested in participating in the campaign before it comes to the table.

Draft Resolution for CUPE Locals

CUPE Locals may want to adopt this resolution at a general membership meeting.

Whereas public health depends on equitable access to clean water supplies; and

Whereas public ownership and operation of water and wastewater treatment systems have improved access and quality over the past century; and

Whereas the privatization of water delivery and wastewater treatment in Britain has led to profound problems, including:

- discrimination against the poor by limiting or disconnecting their water supplies;
- significant increases in diseases such as dysentery and Hepatitis A;
- increased water wastage and leakage; and
- increased prosecutions for pollution while the private shareholders enjoyed large profits at public expense;

Therefore be it resolved that the membership of CUPE Local ____ participate actively in the CUPE Water Watch campaign; and

Be it further resolved that CUPE Local ____ establish a Water Watch committee in our community; and

Be it further resolved that CUPE Local ____ contact community and environmental activists and encourage their participation on the local Water Watch committee.

Draft Resolution for District Labour Councils

CUPE Locals may want to approach CUPE District Councils or District Labour Councils seeking their endorsement of this resolution opposing the privatization of municipal water services.

Whereas public health depends on equitable access to clean water supplies; and

Whereas public ownership and operation of water and wastewater treatment systems have improved access and quality over the past century; and

Whereas the privatization of water delivery and wastewater treatment in Britain has led to profound problems, including:

- discrimination against the poor by limiting or disconnecting their water supplies;
- significant increases in diseases such as dysentery and Hepatitis A;
- increased water wastage and leakage; and
- increased prosecutions for pollution while the private shareholders enjoyed large profits at public expense; and

Whereas the privatization of municipal water and wastewater treatment services would turn water into a commodity to be sold for profit;

Therefore be it resolved, that the _____ Labour Council endorse the CUPE Water Watch campaign and participate actively in the Water Watch committee;

Be it further resolved that the executive of the _____ Labour Council contact elected officials of the municipality and region to discuss the threat of privatization of water services;

Be it further resolved that the executive of the _____ Labour Council join with representatives of CUPE Local ____ to meet with local MPs and members of the provincial legislature to discuss the need for adequate funding from the federal and provincial governments for reinvestment in municipal water and wastewater systems.



Helpful Tips on...

Political Action

What is political action? It's people getting together to involve themselves in the community's political process. It's what you do when you publish a leaflet, talk to co-workers and neighbours, phone reporters, cajole administrators, pressure politicians, set up information pickets and so much more.

It's important to remember that the real target of political action will be elected representatives. Senior staff have some power to influence, but the people who must face the music are the elected officials.

Here's how to get started:

1. Develop a plan of action step by step
2. Find out what your members think and want.
3. Study your administration and determine what makes them react.
4. Involve members in the action and reach out to community allies. It's important that CUPE members participate alongside our coalition partners. It will give everyone involved a sense of momentum.



Here are some direct action ideas:

This is not a comprehensive list and is meant only to help in your planning discussions.

- Organize a neighbourhood leaflet drop. Members could canvass (go door-to-door) a designated neighbourhood – maybe the mayor's – and drop off a leaflet to let people know what's at stake.
- Hold an information picket in front of the city or town hall. If your information picket is being held in the dead of winter, invite a social action group to provide warm drinks of tea and hot chocolate. Invite the media to any information pickets.
- Be vocal. Be public. Plan an action in a public venue with lots of pedestrian traffic. Have music, whistles or some type of noisemaker to draw attention.
- Have an information table at a local mall and distribute leaflets to the public.
- Circulate a petition, asking neighbours to sign. The petition could urge the federal government to increase funding for water and wastewater treatment or it could be targeted locally, urging municipal council to oppose privatization of water services.
- Do something creative. Plan some street theatre at a highly visible place. It could be an outdoor market or busy intersection. Invite the media.
- Approach local school boards about showing the Water Watch video in schools.
- Show the video to your municipal council. If council refuses, rent a screen and show it just outside city hall. Invite the media to the screening.
- Lobby municipal council, and municipal councillors one on one. Keep a tally sheet and monitor their positions. They may change as the campaign evolves.
- Participate in radio talk shows and phone ins.
- Make a list of councillors who support the campaign and those who don't. Turn that list into a poster and plaster the downtown area with the poster. Those who don't support our campaign will hear from the public soon enough.

If the situation escalates and there's a threat that water services could be privatized, the Water Watch committee should re-group and decide how far you are willing to go. Determine the group's comfort level with each and every action.

- Occupy the council chambers, privateer's corporate offices or water plants. Get creative. The stakes are high.
- Have lots of fun. Our cause is just. Our water is not for sale.

Draft Resolution for Municipal Councils on Privatization

CUPE Locals may want to approach Municipal Councils seeking their endorsement of this resolution opposing the privatization of municipal water services.

Whereas public health depends on equitable access to clean water supplies; and

Whereas public ownership and operation of water and wastewater treatment systems have improved access and quality over the past century; and

Whereas the privatization of water delivery and wastewater treatment in Britain has led to profound problems, including:

- discrimination against the poor by limiting or disconnecting their water supplies;
- significant increases in diseases such as dysentery and Hepatitis A;
- increased water wastage and leakage; and
- increased prosecutions for pollution while the private shareholders enjoyed large profits at public expense; and

Whereas the privatization of municipal water and wastewater treatment services would turn water into a commodity to be sold for profit;

Therefore be it resolved that the [name of municipality] oppose the privatization of water and wastewater treatment services, retaining these services in the public domain;

Be it further resolved that Council lobby the federal government to fulfil its responsibility to support reinvestment in Canada's municipal infrastructure, committing a significant level of funding in the federal budget for the year 2000 and beyond;

Be it further resolved that Council lobby the provincial government to join in ensuring an adequate level of funding to expand and upgrade municipal water and wastewater systems.

Be it further resolved that Council forward this resolution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities;

Be it resolved that Council circulate this resolution to members of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Draft Resolution for Municipal Councils on Water Export

Whereas access to a sufficient supply of clean water is a fundamental human right; and

Whereas a reliable supply of water is vital to the environmental and economic health of any community and the wellbeing of its citizens; and

Whereas community water supplies are threatened by the possible diversion and export of bulk water; and

Whereas there is no federal legislation regulating the diversion or export of bulk water:

Therefore be it resolved that Council urges the federal government and, through provincial/territorial associations, provincial governments, to implement legislation to ban bulk water exportation as a first step towards a comprehensive national water policy;

Be it further resolved that Council forward this resolution to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities;

Be it resolved that Council circulate this resolution to members of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.



Helpful Tips on...

Media Relations

The news media can play a key role in helping get your message across to the public. Here are some tips in dealing with the media.

The Water Watch campaign deals with concerns that are shared by many people, including journalists. Some journalists will be interested in the bulk export of water; others in the privatization of public water services; still others in water quality and conservation.

Whatever the angle, water matters. People care about water and who owns it. Journalists, therefore, will want to cover the story.

Water Watch committee members will want the journalists to cover the story from our perspective. For that to happen, it helps to be prepared.

Here's how to get started:

- Always inform your members first – before going to the media. Members of the Water Watch committee should ensure that their Local membership is aware of the campaign and that there is general support for its objectives.
- When contacting the media, make sure you let them know this is news. Remember, news reporting is a job and you are helping journalists by offering a significant story.
- News for most journalists means the launch of the campaign locally, a meeting with the mayor and the results of that meeting or staging a demo or sit in. You should feel comfortable when you do phone that you are calling with information on something newsworthy.



- Have a list of people who could be interviewed by the journalist. Journalists may want to talk to an anti-poverty activist to ask about the impact privatization of water will have on the poor. Or the journalist may want the name of a municipal worker to find out if the campaign is about keeping water public or about jobs or about both. Whatever the topic, it is always helpful to have names and phone numbers of people available.
- Whoever is going to be interviewed should be aware of the founding principles of the campaign and should feel comfortable addressing the media.
- Try to have something in writing. The *Corporate Cash-in* fact sheets are a handy resource and have lots of information journalists would find useful.
- A news release should be short and snappy with relevant information such as a contact name and phone number. Remember, in larger centres journalists get countless news releases so follow up with a phone call. Sometimes that phone call can make all the difference.
- Compile a media list for this campaign. Establish contact early and let the journalist know what you have planned. Swap your media contacts with other groups on the Water Watch committees. Chances are you will have a more complete list if you share information.

The News Release:

1. Make sure you have news to report.
2. Make a list of the facts.
3. Be accurate. Check your facts.
4. Be honest. Liars always get caught.
5. Keep your writing simple – everyday words, short sentences.
6. Avoid jargon.
7. Use direct quotes from the person involved in the story.
8. Proof read before sending the release out.
9. Include a contact name and phone number.
10. Follow up with a phone call.

A big part of the Water Watch campaign is education. The general public is probably not aware of the potential threat to public water services. Writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or a short commentary to be run opposite the editorials is a good way to let people know what is going on. Or you may want to approach community radio or a community cable channel with the offer to produce a program on Water Watch.

Another option is to advertise in community newspapers. Before placing an ad in a newspaper, consider the following:

- You can get free publicity with a public service announcement.
- Your community cable channel may run your message free.
- You can reach the public directly by arranging a canvass or even a mail drop for less money – and more impact – than an ad.
- If you do opt for paid advertising, call the Water Watch line at CUPE National and we will send you camera-ready artwork. This will save you money and help communicate a strong message.

Sample Media Advisory

MEDIA ADVISORY

MAY 5, 1999

**OUR CITY'S WATER IS NOT FOR SALE:
LOCAL ACTIVISTS TO SHOW CITY COUNCIL THAT PUBLIC WORKS!**

WATERTOWN - Members of Local 1234 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees and other concerned citizens of Watertown are stepping up their fight to keep Watertown's water out of corporate hands.

To fight the privatization of Watertown's water system, CUPE Local 1234 and others in the community formed a Water Watch committee in March. After working hard to gather information and support, the group will make its first presentation to City Council:

**Tuesday, May 6, 5:30 p.m.
Room 203, City Hall
123 Main Street
Watertown**

Copies of the Water Watch's presentation will be available to the media, as will CUPE's landmark *Annual Report on Privatization*, the most comprehensive analysis of Canadian privatization done to-date.

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For More Information:

Jane Wong, Watertown Water Watch Committee
Home: 555-6789 Work: 555-0505

Sample News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAY 6, 1999

KEEP WATERTOWN'S WATER PUBLIC, CITY COUNCIL TOLD

WATERTOWN - Watertown's water system should be owned by its citizens and never sold off to a massive corporation, City Council heard yesterday. About 20 members of the local Water Watch committee delivered the message.

The presentation to City Council, which included a video and report, was the local group's first public action, but won't be its last.

"We know what happens when water is privatized. Prices rise, the environment is hurt and disease increases," said Jane Wong of the Water Watch committee and member of CUPE Local 1234. "It happened in Britain and we must ensure it never happens here."

To help stop private water in her community, Wong formed the group with her co-workers and other community activists, including the Watertown Council of Canadians chapter, Environmental Action Watertown and the Dene First Nation.

"We know French and British companies have their eyes on our water. They see it as a source of pure profit. We have to let people know what happens when massive corporations con governments into selling our water to them," said Wong. "We can't wait until the system is sold. As Britain has found out, by then it's too late."

Mike Smith of the Council of Canadians said the federal and provincial governments have a responsibility to help Watertown keep its facilities in public hands.

"Higher levels of government achieved their surpluses by dumping everything onto municipalities like Watertown. Now the deficit battle is won, they can help our city invest in keeping our water system up-to-date and owned by us," he said.

Smith also said corporations are selling quick fixes such as 'public-private partnerships', or privatization through the back door. He warned that the only way to retain control over our own water is to keep the corporations well away.

Copies of the Water Watch committee's report are available and more information is contained on the Canadian Union of Public Employees Web site: www.cupe.ca.

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For More Information:

Jane Wong, Watertown Water Watch Committee
Home: 555-6789 Work: 555-0505

Mike Smith, Watertown Water Watch Committee
Home: 555-2121

Sample Letters to the Editor

- If your municipal council is considering privatization

For publication

To the Editor,

Imagine opening your mail to get a bill for the air you've breathed over the last month.

A scenario nearly as unimaginable may soon become reality in our community. Corporations that can't control the air we breathe want to own and control the next best thing: the water we drink. And our municipal council is considering handing our water services to just such a corporation. The health, environmental and economic consequences will be devastating.

Our water is a public service we trust and rely on. Corporations see water services as a lucrative source of profit. They'll cut corners and hike prices to make that profit.

Water privatization experiments around the world have resulted in contaminated drinking water, increased incidences of diseases like dysentery and Hepatitis A, skyrocketing water bills and lower environmental standards. Here in Canada, Hamilton harbour had the largest sewage spill in its history soon after a private company took over the water treatment plant.

Facing a cash crunch thanks to countless services downloaded to municipalities, council is considering a shortsighted decision that will cost all of us dearly. Experience shows public financing, ownership and operation of water facilities is the efficient, safe and environmentally sound choice.

Once we hand away our water, we lose control of it forever. Citizens are saying no to water for profit. We can't let the unimaginable happen.

Sincerely

YOUR NAME

ADDRESS

CONTACT NUMBER FOR VERIFICATION

To the Editor,

We all drink tap water without worrying if it's safe to do so. We all flush our toilets and knowing the waste is being properly treated. We all rely on our public water system.

If council goes ahead with plans to hand our water system to a private corporation, we lose that security. Council says it's about saving money and keeping costs off the books. But corporations don't take over public services as a gesture of goodwill. They do it to make a profit.

So where's that profit going to come from? I have a few educated guesses. First they'll cut staff and lower standards. That will in turn increase the risk of sewage spills and contaminated drinking water. Once corporations have a monopoly on the system, they'll raise the prices for their captive customers.

Sewage spill cleanups, health hazards, new user fees and unemployed workers don't add up to savings in my books. Let's keep our water public.

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME
ADDRESS
CONTACT NUMBER FOR VERIFICATION

To the Editor,

Hepatitis A and dysentery aren't what you expect when you turn on your kitchen faucet. But we should all be concerned that these and other serious health risks could be on tap if municipal council surrenders control of our water services.

It's exactly what British people faced after private corporations took over the country's water.

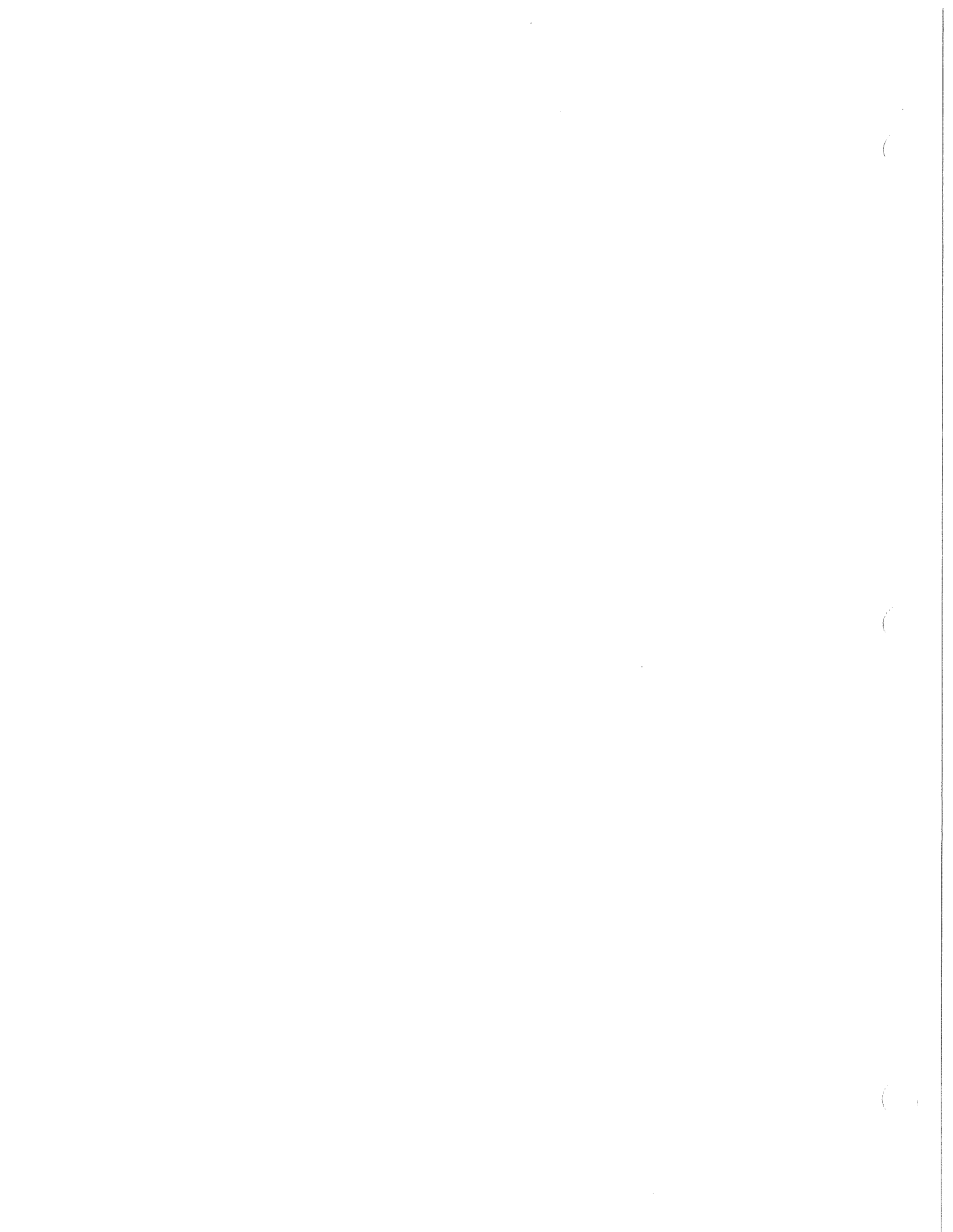
Our council is being courted by water mega-corporations eager to turn a profit by running our water system. If council hands our water treatment facilities to private operators and owners, we're all in trouble.

Privatization of water services has failed around the world. Prices shot up in Britain, as did the number of people cut off because they couldn't pay their water bills. Water-borne diseases increased. Sewage spills and other contamination increased as quality and safety plummeted.

There is no good reason to privatize our water, and every good reason to keep it public. I urge council to listen to the community.

Sincerely

YOUR NAME
ADDRESS
CONTACT NUMBER FOR VERIFICATION



**They can't buy the air
we breathe...**

**...so they want to buy
the water we drink.**

Say no to water for profit.

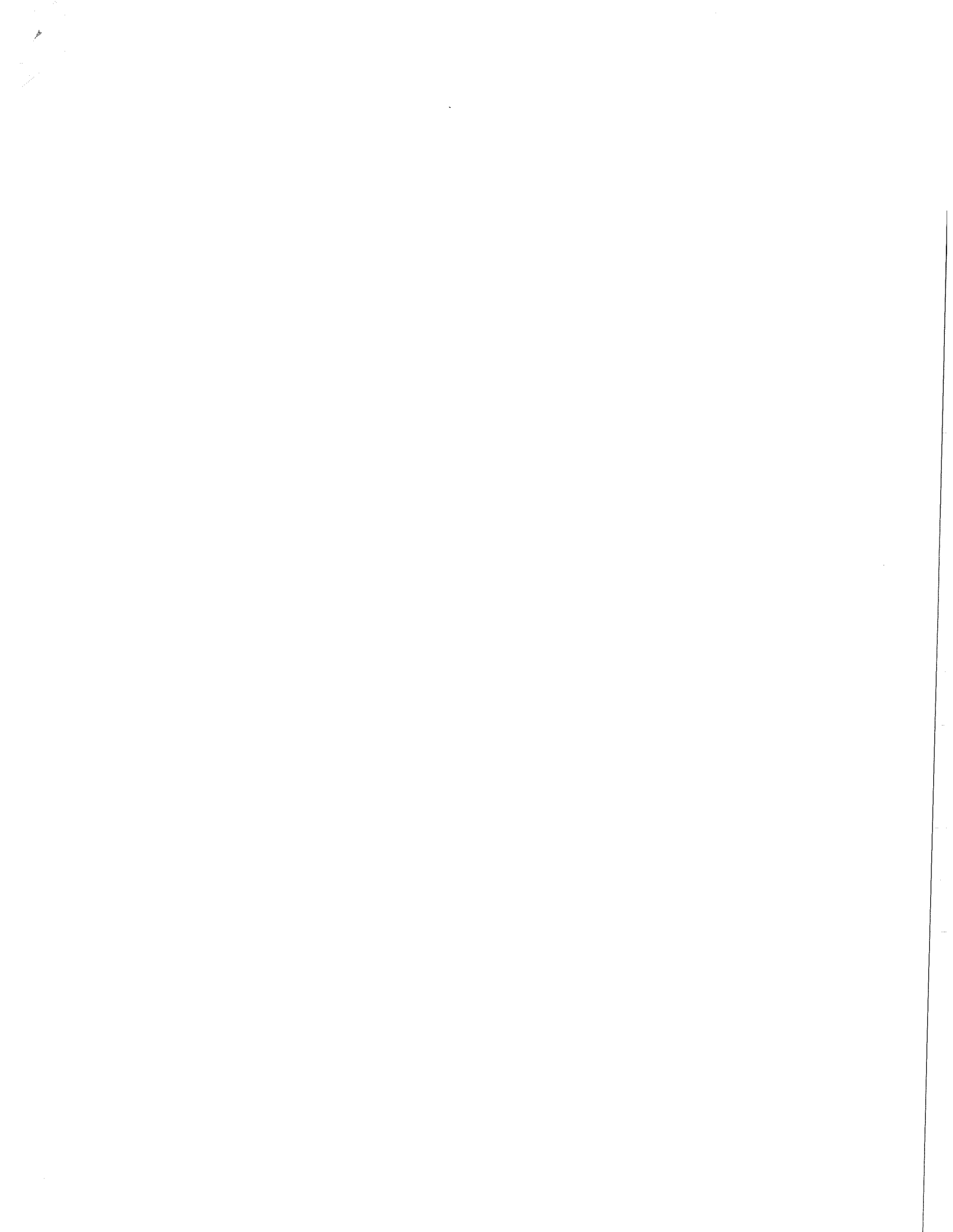


Canadian Union of Public Employees

1-877-CUPE-H2O

www.cupe.ca







Video on Water Privatization

Users' Guide

H₂O the price of privatization is a 10-minute video produced by CUPE to raise awareness and stimulate discussion on the privatization threat to municipal water supplies.

Use the video for:

- General membership meetings of the Local
- Meetings of the CUPE District Council
- Meetings of your District Labour Council
- Presentations to municipal councils and council committees
- Community meetings

When making a presentation:

- Briefly introduce the issue and the Water Watch Committee (one minute)
- Show the video (10 minutes)
- Speak briefly to the situation in your community (maximum five minutes)
- Invite questions and comments
- Recommend a specific action



In your comments, highlight the tremendous risk to the public if ever we lose public control of water at the municipal level. You might include the following points:

- The experience with water privatization elsewhere has been disastrous, raising health and environmental concerns, increasing costs, restricting access and reducing accountability.
- Many municipalities are facing a cash crunch. The privateers are approaching municipalities with an offer to buy our municipal infrastructure and sell water to the public at a profit.
- Water is not a commodity to be bought and sold. Water is a life source – a basic human right.
- CUPE believes that the federal and provincial governments have a responsibility to share the cost of basic public infrastructure, including water and wastewater services, and is willing to work with municipal councils to lobby for increased federal and provincial transfers for water services.

When you're making a presentation, you should always have a specific objective; for example, to sign up new members to the Water Watch Committee or support a municipal resolution opposing privatization.

When presenting the video you may want to distribute:

- Copies of resolutions supporting the public ownership of water
- CUPE's research paper entitled *Water for Profit: Coming to a Community Near You?* (B3) or the summary document *Canada's Water under Threat* (B2)
- A list of local groups who are concerned about this issue to demonstrate broad community support
- Copies of the Water Watch leaflet

You should always check that:

- There is a VCR and television available
- There is a cord and electrical outlet
- The monitor is large enough for the size of the audience

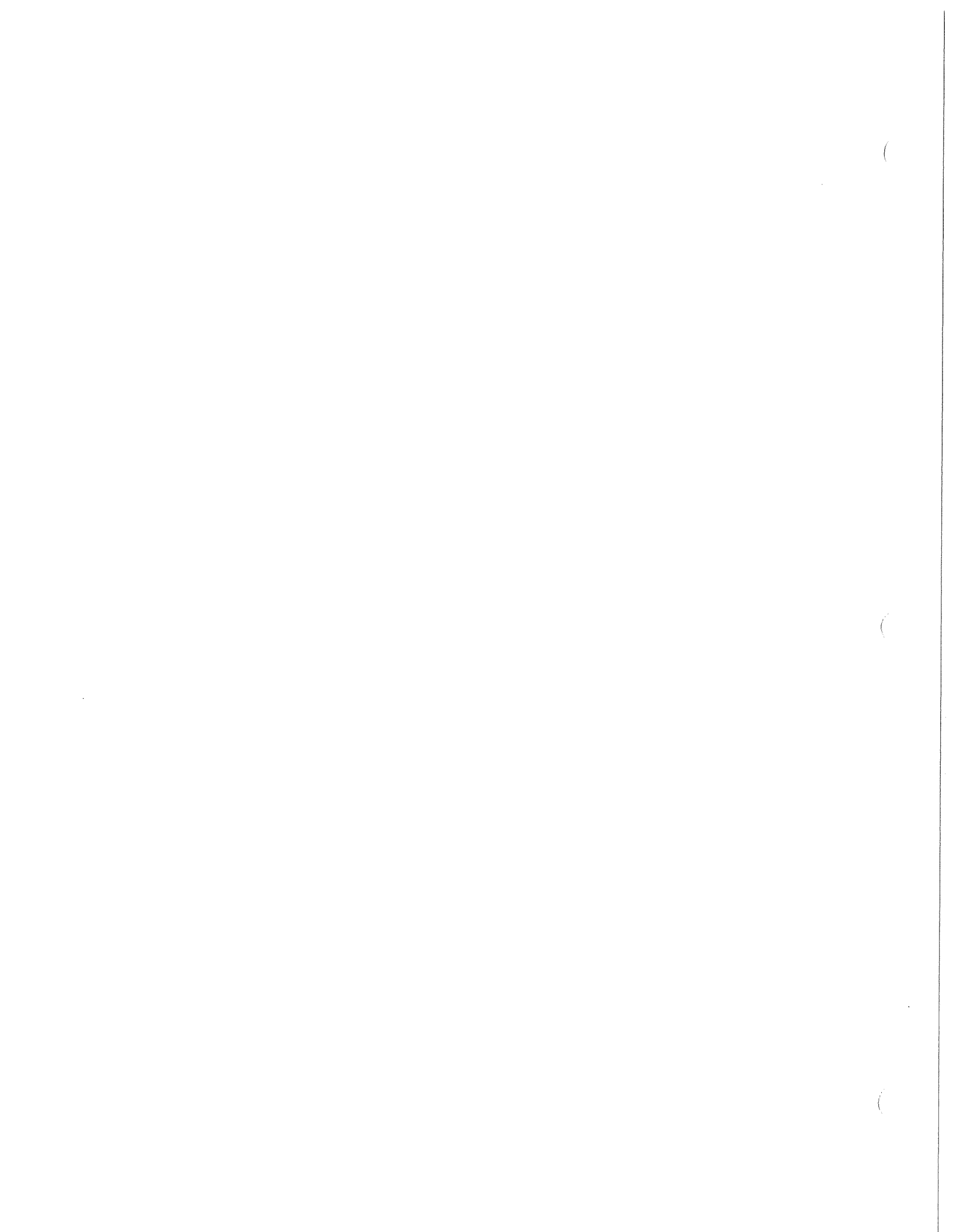
Cue the video and check the sound levels before the presentation so that you aren't keeping your audience waiting.

Other ideas

If you're showing the video to your local council or a council committee, make sure there are members of the Water Watch committee in the gallery to demonstrate public concern.

Journalists are interested in this issue and some may wish to view the video. Issue a news release informing the media when you'll be showing the video to council or arrange a special viewing.

Approach a community cable channel and see if they might broadcast the video. Combine the showing with a couple of speakers or a panel who can talk about the threat in your community. In some areas, the Federation of Labour hosts a cable broadcast. Ask them to present a program on water privatization.



Logos

