



ActionH₂O Activist Toolkit



SIERRA
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CANADA



POLIS Project on Ecological Governance

watersustainabilityproject

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ActionH₂O Campaign Background	2
ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter	2
The ActionH₂O Strategy	3
Measuring Progress	4
How Organize Your Campaign: A Checklist	7
• Step 1: Get Your Team Together	
Form a Local ActionH ₂ O Campaign Organizing Committee	7
• Step 2: Engage the Entire Community	
Reach Out and Invite the Participation of Community Partners	8
• Step 3: What’s already being Done?	
Research Your City’s Actions	9
• Step 4: Understand Your City Government	
Analyze Your Mayor, Councillors and Other Key Decision-Makers	9
• Step 5: Complete Your Game Plan	
Finalize Your Campaign Plan with Your Partners	10
• Step 6: Ask For What You Want	
Make the Request and Follow Up with a Meeting	10
• Step 7: Make It Public	
Organize a Blue City News Conference	11
• Step 8: Hold Feet to the Fire	
Tactics to Pressure the Reluctant Council	13
• Step 9: Moving Your Council from Talk to Action	
Holding Your Elected Officials Accountable	14
• Step 10: Moving Your Campaign Forward	
Keeping Volunteers Energized	14
<u>APPENDIX:</u>	
Planning Water Smart Events	16
Water Smart Solutions: What to Advocate	17

ActionH₂O Campaign Background

The ActionH₂O campaign was developed to provide community groups, Sierra Club Canada members, volunteers and staff with concrete ways to work for positive, visionary solutions for water management in their communities. The purpose of this *ActionH₂O Activist Toolkit* is to provide the resources that citizens need to engage their community leaders and get their communities and cities to take real action to reduce water consumption.

The ActionH₂O campaign offers an opportunity to realize our shared vision of a sustainable water future in the communities where we live.

Initially, it may seem daunting to get your city committed to a creating and implementing a water conservation plan. However, as you accomplish the steps in this toolkit one by one, it will be clear that you and your fellow community members can really make a huge difference.

If at any time you need help in moving your local ActionH₂O effort forward, please feel free to [contact](#) the ActionH₂O project coordinators:

- Celeste Côté at celestec@sierraclub.ca
- Susanne Porter-Bopp at water@polisproject.org

In the meantime, more information and resources are available at the campaign website, www.actionh2o.ca.

ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter

The purpose of the [ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter](#) is to commit local government councils across Canada to achieving local water conservation goals. By signing the Charter, communities have the opportunity to be part of a Canada-wide network of leaders, innovators and champions working toward local and regional water conservation goals.

From an ActionH₂O campaign perspective, the Charter is intended to be both a *public accountability tool* and a *community building tool* that holds local government staff and politicians accountable to a clear commitment to water stewardship, efficiency and conservation, and an integrated approach to resource management in their communities.

The **ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter** seeks to:

- Establish common understanding, priorities, and responsibilities toward a commitment to water sustainability in the community;
- Enhance community water management by explicitly emphasizing conservation as a priority;
- Enable local governments to make good decisions that are based on sound information, can be successfully implemented, and have a positive impact.

The Water Sustainability Charter, the [Water Sustainability Charter Toolkit](#), and other ActionH₂O resources are available on the website along with more information at www.actionh2o.ca/resources.

The ActionH₂O Strategy

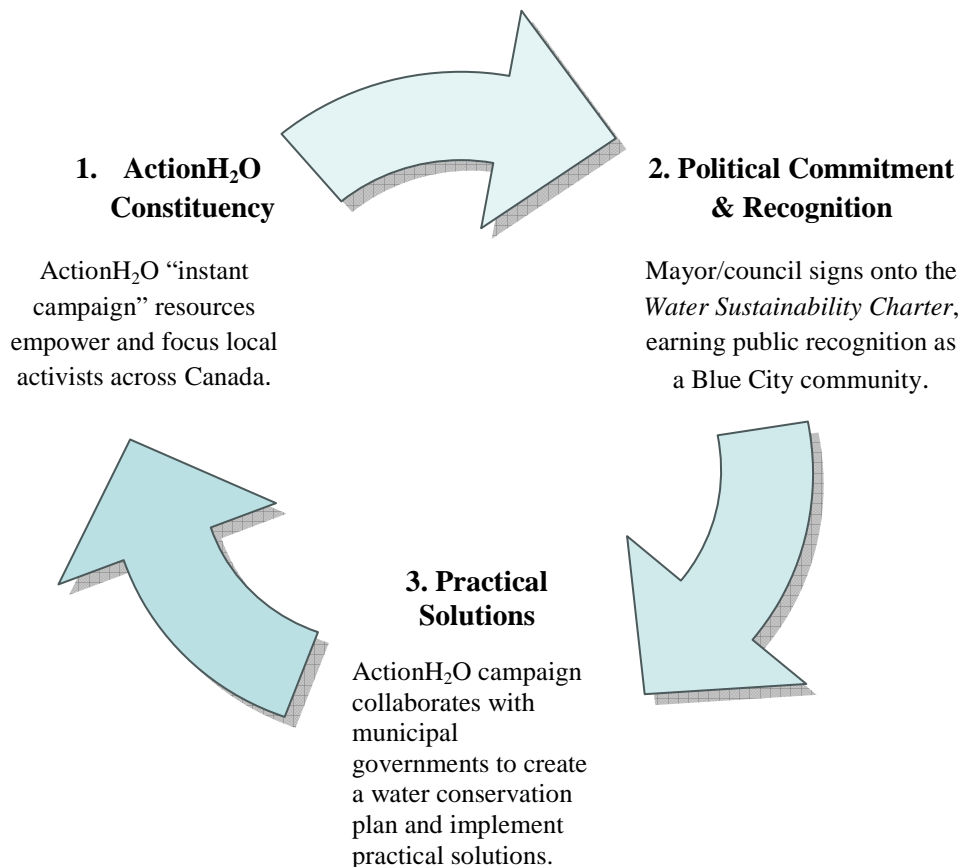
The ActionH₂O strategy can use the *ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter* as a starting point to achieve three important goals:

- 1) Get communities and cities (and eventually provinces, territories and the federal government) to take action on water conservation.**
- 2) Energize, support and build local volunteer activism and influence, both inside and outside Sierra Club Canada.**
- 3) Develop an awareness of the best local government water conservation practices and encourage the adoption of these measures in communities across Canada.**

Accordingly, each local ActionH₂O campaign has two major overlapping goals, one environmental and the other organizational.

Your primary goal is to have your city or community implement meaningful “Blue City” solutions that result in measurable reductions of overall water use. Successful local ActionH₂O campaigns build public demand for sustainable water solutions and turn municipal councillors and other local officials into advocates for water conservation. As more municipalities take successful action on water conservation and efficiency, the federal government will face increased pressure to take action on water sustainability at the national level.

The organizational goal for your local ActionH₂O campaign is as important as the conservation victories: to attract, engage and empower more local long-term volunteer activists and form stronger partnerships across your community. By establishing and deepening a positive working relationship with your municipal government and other partner organizations, the capacity of your local Sierra Club group or community group to tackle larger environmental and social goals will increase.



Measuring Progress

The ActionH₂O campaign has five milestones for municipal governments and four milestones for community activists, though each set is slightly different. As there can be some confusion between the two, all you need to remember is that the Local ActionH₂O Campaign Milestones are for local activists like yourself to follow and the Water Smart Milestones are for municipal governments to follow.

Local ActionH₂O Campaign Milestones	
Milestone 1	<p><u>Establish Campaign</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Convene an ActionH₂O campaign team of 3 to 7 activist volunteers. - Write a city/community profile on the ActionH₂O website.
Milestone 2	<p><u>Engage the Community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a Campaign Plan. - Generate at least 5 citizen letters, an op-ed and 3 letters to the editor. - Deliver an ActionH₂O presentation to at least 3 local community groups. - Send a formal letter to your municipal council requesting the mayor to sign on to the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter, co-signed by at least two partner community groups.

Milestone 3	<p><u>City Signs on to ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with the mayor and city councillors along with one to three community groups to discuss becoming a water smart community. - Mayor signs on to the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter on behalf of the city.
Milestone 4	<p><u>Initial Solution Steps</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City establishes committee to create local water conservation plan. - Hold a media event applauding your council's commitment. - City initiates early implementation actions (e.g. faucet aerators or low-flow toilet rebate programme for City offices, xeriscaping on City property). - City performs an environmental audit of municipal operations from a water use perspective. - City establishes action plan for municipal operations.
Milestone 5	<p><u>Advanced Water Smart Solutions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City performs community-wide "water audit." - City completes water conservation plan with specific solutions to meet target reductions in water consumption. - City adopts water efficiency policies and bylaws, and integrates these with broader community plans (e.g. green building standards, lawn watering bylaws, etc.). - City implements other water efficiency initiatives (e.g. low-flow toilet rebate programs, xeriscaping education programs). - City supports provincial/territorial action to reduce water consumption (e.g. net metering). - City publishes annual report tracking its progress in meeting water conservation goals. - Mayor champions action on water conservation in neighbouring communities in the watershed at the provincial/territorial and national levels.

Water Smart Milestones for Municipalities	
Milestone 1	<p><u>Water Consumption Reduction Target</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A water use reduction target can be established at any time. - To develop a reduction target, a municipal government usually seeks the input of residents, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Council must adopt the water use reduction target, and set a timeline for achieving it. - The water use reduction target forms the basis of a municipality's program objectives and provides a starting point from which to track progress.

<p>Milestone 2</p>	<p><u>Establishing a Local Action Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Local Action Plan (LAP) outlines how your municipality will achieve its water use reduction target. - The LAP covers municipal operations and the community. Municipal governments are encouraged to first develop and implement a plan for municipal operations. In doing so, they demonstrate leadership and provide a positive example for the community. - A community-wide LAP is more complex to develop and implement, as it requires input and co-ordination from many stakeholders, such as citizens’ groups, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The water use reduction potential of the residential sector, however, is generally greater than that of municipal operations.
<p>Milestone 3</p>	<p><u>Implementing the Local Action Plan</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once a community has established a water use reduction target and Local Action Plan (LAP), the focus turns to implementation. Municipal staff will be responsible for putting the LAP into motion and maintaining momentum. In-house personnel, non-governmental organizations and private-sector contractors can complete the implementation of specific projects. To ensure that the plan is successful, it is essential to have the approval and support of council, municipal staff and the community.
<p>Milestone 4</p>	<p><u>Monitoring Progress and Reporting Results</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Progress must be routinely monitored and tracked to ensure that the water use reduction measures are implemented effectively and on schedule. You will need to quantify the water use reductions your municipality achieves and compare them to the community’s water use reduction targets. - It will be difficult to assess whether you have reached your target if you have not tracked results. Monitoring progress allows you to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine whether your reduction measures are producing the anticipated results. • Clarify whether the water reduction target will be met. • Apply to receive national recognition for your achievements through the FCM-CH2M HILL Sustainable Community Awards. - Results can be included in existing reports produced by your municipal government, such as a sustainability progress report. Alternatively, they can be described in a stand-alone document. As well as monitoring water use reductions, your municipality can track co-benefits, such as: reduced costs, increased use of innovative technologies, reductions in GHG emissions related to increased water efficiency and improvements to water quality. - Reaching Milestone Five is a significant achievement, but it does not signal the end of your community’s water use reduction efforts. A Local Action Plan is a living document that is revised as information, ideas and circumstances evolve. Water Sustainability is a continuous process that can yield significant benefits for a municipal government over both the short and long term.

If your local government has signed onto the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter, then your campaign will have already reached *ActionH₂O Milestone #3*. Many of Canada's cities have yet to develop and implement a real action plan to meet their reduction targets. That's where you come in! The ActionH₂O campaign is about mobilizing grassroots support in order to put pressure on municipal governments to not only sign onto the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter (or develop one that is tailored to your community's water needs), but also put concrete policies in place that will reduce water consumption.

How to Organize Your Campaign: An ActionH₂O Checklist

The best way to organize your local ActionH₂O campaign is to break the process into ten steps. Each of these steps will be explained in the following pages, with specific advice and supporting materials to help your campaign.

Step 1: Get Your Team Together Form a Local ActionH₂O Campaign Organizing Committee

The first step is to gather together fellow Sierra Club Canada members who are concerned about water issues as well as other interested community members and grassroots organisations working on water issues. Together, you can form the core committee that will do the initial campaign planning. You could organize a potluck or film night at a community centre to get people interested. Hosting an ActionH₂O house party is another way to bring people together to have fun and start the planning process.

You want people to hear about your event in at least three different ways:

- 1) Identify and mail invitations to neighbourhood Sierra Club Canada members.** Work with your local Sierra Club Canada group to obtain membership data. Follow up with phone calls to find volunteers to help recruit and run the event.
- 2) Campaign Materials:** Make a flyer available at all local Sierra Club and other relevant community group activities and meetings.
- 3) Newsletters and Newspapers:** Placing announcements in Sierra Club newsletters and community newspapers requires the most lead time (3-4 weeks in many cases).
- 4) Posters:** Postering at friendly businesses, coffee shops, and restaurants is an easy volunteer activity. Set a goal for postering, and coordinate times for volunteers to go out and hit the streets.
- 5) Follow-Up Phone Calls:** Call your regular membership lists and folks who filled out volunteer cards/sign-up sheets from other events.

6) Internet: You can get the word out through listservs and websites such as Facebook, though it's best to avoid relying solely on the internet.

Before the initial meeting, sign up on the website (www.actionh2o.ca) to download the basic ActionH₂O materials (ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter Toolkit, Thinking Beyond Pipes and Pumps: Top Ten Ways Communities Can Save Water and Money, POLIS Water Conservation Toolkit). Thinking through and writing down your local campaign plan will encourage time-and-resource efficient planning of specific goals, tactics, key messages, public engagement, media outreach and other campaign considerations.

The agenda for the first meeting should include brainstorming which community partners you will invite to the next gathering, who will be responsible for researching your community's current policies and actions and how best to persuade your mayor and council.

Step 2: Engage the Entire Community Reach Out and Invite the Participation of Community Partners

Because a local campaign representing a diverse coalition of interests will usually be more effective than one coming solely from Sierra Club Canada, it's important to reach out to partners from many different communities. Community partners can be invited to help plan and participate in the campaign. Potential partners include: other environmental groups, faith communities, unions, labour councils, businesses, community associations, as well as student groups from universities, colleges, CÉGEP's and high schools.

To help promote green building practices, you may want to join forces with local green builders, architects and building owners. Contact your local Canada Green Building Council chapter (cagbc.org) or a local association of the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) of Canada (www.bomacanada.ca).

Contact local community groups that may be interested in your efforts and ask them if you can present a talk about the ActionH₂O campaign at their next meeting. A presentation can be as simple as getting up and speaking for five minutes about your campaign, or as complicated as a long PowerPoint presentation. If you need help creating a presentation, please contact the ActionH₂O campaign staff.

It is important that each of your partner groups has a real role in planning and decision-making for the campaign. While ActionH₂O provides a framework for the campaign, there are many strategic decisions to be made along the way including how, where and when to do media events, or how to publicize the benefits of your city's efforts to become more water smart.

Effective, enduring partnerships are created when we make an effort to go beyond persuading other groups to join a meeting or sign on to a letter. Shared, inclusive decision-

making builds trust and community. Be sensitive to what your partners need to get out of the campaign and be generous with the media spotlight – other community activists can share the credit too. Your partnerships will need to be strong and durable to make your city “water smart” in the long run.

Step 3: What’s Already Being Done? Research Your City’s Actions

Before approaching your mayor and municipal councillors for the first time, it’s important to recognize what your community is currently doing. You will want to celebrate these actions, no matter how insignificant they may seem to be, since they are the foundation upon which your community can build. Building on this foundation, you can determine what solutions you can put forward.

Many Canadian communities already have water conservation goals, but have yet to develop and implement a real action plan to meet their water use reduction targets. The ActionH₂O campaign mobilizes grassroots support to pressure municipal governments to make the initial commitment of signing onto the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter, but that is just the first stage. For communities that already have a water conservation plan, the focus is on putting concrete policies in place to reduce water consumption. There is still much work to be done!

Step 4: Understand Your City Government Analyze Your Mayor, Councillors and Other Key Decision-Makers

You can start by answering some key questions: Who are your allies on council? Who gets the attention of councillors? You can often learn a lot by looking at the minutes of council meetings. The minutes will usually record the votes in favour of council motions and you will get a sense of which councillors are interested in environmental concerns.

Some councillors may be more in touch with constituencies such as local businesses, faith groups and schools. Support from a broad range of groups will help demonstrate to council that there is broad support for your campaign.

If your council is particularly sensitive to economic and tax relief arguments, then you could highlight the benefits of reduced water use and subsequent reduced infrastructure and maintenance costs. Try to find a local business leader who understands firsthand the savings from water efficiency, and ask that person to support your campaign by writing letters to councillors or making a presentation at a council meeting.

Step 5: Complete Your Game Plan Finalize Your Campaign Plan with Your Partners

At a public meeting, distribute copies of [Thinking Beyond Pipes and Pumps](#) and give an overview of the ActionH₂O campaign objectives. The agenda should include a discussion of which specific solutions your campaign will be advocating. See “Water Smart Solutions: What to Advocate” in this toolkit for guidance.

The central task for the meeting with your community partners is to finalize a campaign plan. If your city or town does not have a comprehensive water conservation plan, you can prepare to ask your mayor to sign onto the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter. During the meeting, you can finalize the texts of letters to your mayor and councillors, and determine who will send them. See Step 6 below and a model letter on the [ActionH₂O Resource page](#).

Step 6: Ask For What You Want Make the Request and Follow Up with a Meeting

When you are ready, send a formal letter requesting that your council take action and then follow up with a meeting with the mayor, councillors or city staff (see the [ActionH₂O Resource page](#) for a sample letter). To give a clearer idea of the campaign’s goals, enclose or present a copy of the *Thinking Beyond Pipes and Pumps*. If you can arrange it, make the initial request in writing and/or in person with some Water Smart partners from outside the environmental community.

In your initial request, you should recognize what the community is doing, and let them know that representatives of your group would like to participate in formulating the community’s water conservation plan which will contain specific action items. If the community has an existing committee for this purpose, ask if you could join. If the community is just starting on a water conservation plan, then recommend that the mayor form a Water Smart Citizens Advisory Committee with representatives from a broad spectrum of the community. For links to sample water conservation plans, see the Appendix.

The community should be strongly encouraged to take actions now while the plan is being discussed and finalized. If your council is reluctant to take action, then you will need to step up the community pressure. For “Tactics to Pressure Your Reluctant Council” go to Step 8 below.

Step 7: Make It Public

Organize an ActionH₂O News Conference

If at this point the council agrees to sign on to the Water Sustainability Charter, request the mayor's participation in a news conference to announce the signing and to thank the council publicly.

Your successful news conference with the mayor will increase our chances for victory by:

- 1) Creating an initial expectation that the council is committed to action.
- 2) Elevating the issue for the local media.
- 3) Strengthening relationships with the municipal government office.
- 4) Providing a meaningful and fun activity for volunteers.

Tell the mayor that at the news conference you would like to present a "Blue City" certificate (available upon request from actionh2o@sierraclub.ca or online at www.ActionH2O.ca). Inform the mayor that you intend to praise the community's current water solutions and that you will call for a city water conservation action plan and the implementation of appropriate water solutions. For step-by-step advice on planning the news conference, see the [ActionH₂O Resource page](#). There you will find media materials including a sample news release.

It's a smart tactical investment to follow up the news conference (and any news stories the conference generates) with several letters-to-the-editor and a guest column (op-ed) about the mayor signing on. These efforts are very important in order to set up accountability down the road. Examples of ActionH₂O letters-to-the-editor and an op-ed can be found on the [ActionH₂O Resource Page](#).

Now that your mayor has signed the agreement and you've spread the news to the public via the news conference and media outreach, it's time to bring more local citizens together. You must take the next steps to advocate specific solutions and put pressure on council to carry out its commitment.

We recommend that, soon after the news conference, you hold a meeting to celebrate your campaign's progress and plan where to go from here. Be sure to schedule some time to have people write letters to the editor thanking the mayor and publicizing the campaign.

Practical tips for planning your ActionH₂O news conference

- 1. Contact your mayor's office and ask about his or her availability to participate in your news conference**, keeping in mind that Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday mornings (10 or 11 am) are generally the best times for media coverage. The best location for your news conference is in front of city hall, or at a location that demonstrates the use of a water savvy solution, such as an energy efficient building, wind turbines or solar panels.

2. Tell the mayor that at the news conference you want to:

- Publicly thank council for its leadership in signing onto the Water Sustainability Charter. If you wish, you may want to tell the mayor that Sierra Club Canada will present council with a framed “ActionH₂O Certificate” (contact Celeste Côté at celestec@sierraclub.ca to request a customizable model or visit www.actionh2o.ca).
- Praise what the city is already doing (and planning to do if it’s real) to save water.
- Call for more local solutions that save water, energy and taxpayer dollars while reducing pollution.
- Provide a forum for the mayor to tell the media and residents about these solutions.

3. Ask the mayor to submit a sentence or two for inclusion in your news release.

For examples, see the list of mayors’ quotes for a climate campaign at <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/climate/quotes.htm#quotes>.

4. To prepare for the news conference, research what the city is doing now in terms of local water conservation solutions (ie. water efficiency, metering, green rooftops). Be sure to praise one or two of these specific positive steps at the news conference. See “Sample News Conference Remarks” in the Appendix to help prepare your statement to the press.

5. Once the mayor agrees to participate in your news conference and the date is settled, begin spreading the word of the event to fellow activists.

6. A few days before the news conference, prepare your local news release and media advisory (see templates on the [ActionH₂O resource page](#)). Fax the media advisory to local TV, print and radio reporters and editors at least twice—once a few days before the event, and then the day beforehand. Make sure to follow up the faxes with phone calls.

7. Bring:

- a. Sierra Club Canada’s and other involved community groups’ banners or placards to the event along with a podium to hang it on;
- b. Ten copies of the news release;
- c. Enough copies of the *Thinking Beyond Pipes and Pumps* and fact sheets for distribution to the media and public officials.

For more advice on organizing an effective news conference and public and media events see “Planning ActionH₂O Events” in the Appendix.

******* Note Concerning Policy on Political Non-Partisanship *******

In order to remain effective, Sierra Club Canada has a Policy on Political Non-Partisanship, whereby no political party (whether federal, provincial/territorial, or municipal) is to receive favourable treatment. As a result, Sierra Club Canada's national office, chapters, and groups are discouraged from engaging in political advocacy work that is partisan in nature. If you have any further questions about Sierra Club Canada's Policy of Political Non-Partisanship, feel free to contact us at actionh2o@sierraclub.ca.

Please remember to email photos, media clips, and a short report of your news conference to actionh2o@sierraclub.ca for posting to the ActionH₂O website (www.ActionH2O.ca).

We plan on sharing your local success stories to inspire other ActionH₂O activists and mayors, and help raise public awareness about the campaign.

**Step 8: Holding Feet to the Fire
Tactics to Pressure the Reluctant Council**

If your city council is reluctant to sign onto the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter or adopt Water Smart solutions, there are several tactics you can consider. These include:

- Send and/or present an open letter addressed to council, signed by a broad coalition of community groups.
- Collect signatures from the public on postcards or petitions, and then present them to the mayor in person – ideally, in front of the media.
- Meet with community associations, environmental groups, unions, faith communities, school boards and businesses, asking them to support a call for action on climate change.
- Organize a public event such as a film night or public talk and ask people who attend to contact council.
- Appeal for letters to the editor, and submit an op-ed to your local newspaper.
- Ask supportive local community leaders to talk to council about taking action.
- Ask mayors and councillors from cities that have signed onto the Water Sustainability Charter to contact your council.

- If your council follows the lead of city staff on these issues, seek their support ahead of time.
- Highlight the positive social and economic benefits for cities that take action on water sustainability.

See “Planning ActionH₂O Events” in the Appendix for more practical organizing tips.

Step 9: Moving Your Council from Talk to Action Holding Your Elected Officials Accountable

If your city council already has a water conservation program but isn’t taking any action or is delaying action, your campaign will need to focus on getting council to honour its promises.

If you organized a media conference to congratulate the mayor for signing the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter, you can now hold your elected officials accountable. The mayor will have received positive attention for signing onto the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter and will have gone on record expressing resolve to take action. Now you can remind the public about the city’s promise. Your media messaging can focus on accountability. Encourage the reluctant mayor and councillors to respond, by asking them to “walk the talk,” and “honour the promise.”

Another tactic is to focus your efforts on specific energy solutions to help jump start action. You can advocate replacing water-wasting 13L flush toilets with dual-flush or composting toilets in city buildings. You could push for a regulation requiring the city to purchase water-efficient appliances and practice [xeriscaping](#) (growing local, low-maintenance plants instead of exotic species that require watering) on all municipal property. Or you could support more visible, higher-profile solutions such as green rooftops or passing a bylaw that requires all new buildings to plumb for rainwater harvesting or greywater reuse for non-potable uses such as irrigation and toilet. See *Thinking Beyond Pipes and Pumps* for ideas.

In many cases, you will ask council to support a water smart solution – for example, green building standards. Your group may also ask council to oppose water-intensive projects, such as a new golf course. These projects make it much more difficult for cities to meet water conservation targets.

Step 10: Moving Your Campaign Forward Keeping Volunteers Energized

The keys to keeping the momentum of your local ActionH₂O campaign moving forward are to stay involved in your city’s decision-making process and communicate regularly with fellow volunteers and partners.

If you were able to arrange for a representative from your campaign to participate in your city's "Water Smart Citizens Advisory committee", make sure that you distribute progress reports and meeting notes widely. Reports of specific successes are particularly important to keeping people motivated, as is celebrating these accomplishments.

Other good ways to keep people involved include:

- Arranging periodic presentations on local water solutions and other water-related issues from local government officials, business owners and water experts.
- Giving your own ActionH₂O presentations to community groups.
- Showing and discussing short water films such as [FLOW](#), Blue Gold, Waterlife, etc.
- Holding a book discussion group.
- Sending out pertinent water conservation solution stories via an email listserv (people are motivated by successes most of all).
- Mailing an ActionH₂O newsletter.
- Tabling and participating at public events and festivals.
- Organizing group tours and site visits to noteworthy local water efficient buildings or green rooftop projects.
- Asking your local community newspaper for a regular column about water issues.
- Meeting with your local newspaper's editor or editorial board to discuss the city's progress and/or implementation of a solution.

Your campaign should also **try to enlist your mayor to become an advocate to reach out to other mayors in your province/territory**. Ask your mayor for a letter that urges other mayors to sign onto the ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter, and adopt the money-, water- and energy-saving solutions that are successful in your city. *Success breeds success!*

Appendix

Planning Water Smart Events

Water smart events (the news conference, community events like Earth Day, rallies, picnics, etc.) are a great opportunity for generating local media stories to highlight visionary local solutions. In addition to the tips provided here, see the detailed, step-by-step media event planning guide on the ActionH₂O website.

1) Good press event locations.

Make sure your location is visually interesting for TV cameras and photographers, related to the event theme, and speaker-friendly. You want the media and community attendees to be able to hear what the speakers are saying. Avoid noisy, high traffic places.

2) Have your volunteers ready!

Remember to have volunteers ready to fill lots of roles: media greeters, registration tables, as well as setting up, taking down, etc.

3) Make sure each media outlet is greeted by someone

so you can get their contact info (to build a lasting relationship with the reporter/photographer/camera person). Give them the ActionH₂O press packet (a nice looking folder containing media advisory, news release, copy of *Thinking Beyond Pipes and Pumps*, and appropriate supplemental materials—like fact sheets (available on the [ActionH₂O website](#)), specifics for your community, etc.

4) Effective Speakers.

A typical media event lasts no longer than 30 minutes and includes between two and four speakers. A dedicated, well-spoken volunteer should welcome folks to the event, read a short statement at the event, and then introduce the mayor (and possibly City Council members and other civic leaders). Don't forget to hang a Sierra Club Canada banner or placard by or behind the podium. End the event by thanking participants and inviting questions from the media.

5) Follow-up with the no-show media outlets

by faxing the news release as soon as possible and following up with phone calls. These are valuable opportunities to pitch your story once more, share the press release, and maybe even get more radio interviews after the event ends.

6) Follow up with speakers and volunteers after the event.

To keep volunteers and event participants energized and engaged, thank them for participating and send them copies of any news clips. Ask what they thought about the event, and encourage them to get involved with your next event.

Water Smart Solutions: What to Advocate

Once your community has made the commitment to sign the [ActionH₂O Water Sustainability Charter](#) and you've gotten the word out to the community, it is time to develop policies and implement solutions that will help the city meet its goals.

When discussing solutions with your mayor, councillors and city staff, you can give specific examples of best practices from other cities. Use [Thinking Beyond Pipes and Pumps: Top Ten Ways Communities Can Save Water and Money](#) to talk about how other cities are taking action. You can relate your proposed solution to measures adopted elsewhere and help globalize local solutions developed by communities across Canada.

For example:

- Promote water sensitive urban design by limiting sprawling lawns (Kelowna, BC).
- Create a social-based marketing programme that targets residential outdoor water use (the highest residential water use) (Durham, ON)
- Link water conservation to development by making development permits contingent on demand management and action (Salt Spring Island, BC)
- Hire permanent staff to oversee water conservation programmes (many, including Calgary, Guelph and the Capital Regional District)
- Detect and repair leaks in municipal infrastructure by integrating regular water audits and maintenance programmes (Halifax and many others)