

NATIONAL “GO BLUE” CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES CANADIANS TO CUT WATER USE IN HALF

Visit goblue.org to find out why Canada’s fresh water is at risk; calculate how much you’re wasting and take steps to reduce

Toronto, ON (April 16, 2008) – Canada's fresh water supply is at risk. In many parts of Canada we are using our drinking water faster than nature can renew it, and we need to reduce our wasteful water habits. That’s the message of a campaign, launched today, GO BLUE, which encourages Canadians to conserve water.

“Canadians are huge water wasters. We are the second largest water users in the world, just behind the Americans, and we don’t seem to understand that our long-term supply of water is at risk,” says Bob Sandford, Chair, Canadian Partnership Initiative of the UN Water for Life Decade. “Everyone has a role to play in protecting this precious resource and it’s time for Canadians to start making changes.”

GO BLUE is supported by Waterlution, Water Matters, Polis and The Canadian Partnership of the UN Water for Life Decade. It is a Unilever Canada initiative that encourages Canadians to cut their water use by half. The campaign includes national TV, print, out-of-home, online, and in-store communication. Simple changes to water use habits and household equipment can reduce water consumption says Environment Canada.¹ GO BLUE encourages Canadians to try to aim for a 50 per cent reduction, reducing water use both in home and in their gardens.

Starting today, Canadians can visit goblue.org to find information about Canada’s fresh water supply and water-saving tips for the bathroom, kitchen, laundry room and garden. They can also access a unique water footprint calculator, which allows them to measure how much water they’re using in each room, and then learn tips on how to reduce water use. Users can track their successes online, and invite others to do the same.

“We want GO BLUE to help Canadians become more mindful of water as a precious resource, and motivate them to reduce their water use,” says Sharon MacLeod, Marketing Director Unilever Canada. “We believe that by making a few simple changes to how we think about and use water, especially in the home, Canadians can really make an impact.”

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Poll Reveals Canadians' Personal Water Habits

It's easy to save water using GO BLUE tips at-home, but most Canadians haven't adopted consistent water conservation strategies. A recent IPSOs-Reid poll, commissioned by Unilever, RBC and the Canadian Partnership Initiative of the UN Water for Life Decade, of Canadians' personal water habits reveals that only six per cent consider themselves to be a threat to Canada's long-term supply of fresh water. More than half of all Canadians (52%) think Canadians in general are doing enough to conserve fresh water. Yet, Canadians are the second largest wasters of water on the planet. Other poll highlights include:

- **Bath vs. shower:** Just over half of Canadians (55%) correctly noted that a bath uses more water than a 10-minute shower. Tip from GO BLUE: replace your bath with a short shower. A standard bath uses about 75 litres of water, while a five-minute shower with a low-flow shower head uses about half that amount.ⁱⁱ
- **Amount of time in the shower:** Canadians spend an average of 7.6 minutes in the shower. Young Canadians (18-34) spend the most time in the shower at 9.6 minutes, and those 55+ take shorter showers, at 6.3 minutes. Regionally, Albertans spend the most time in the shower (8.4 minutes). Tip from GO BLUE: install a low-flow showerhead and reduce your time in the shower. By installing a low-flow showerhead you and your family could save more than an average swimming pool full of water a year.
- **Toilet flushing:** On average Canadians flush their toilet 4.9 times a day. A family of four flushes almost 20 times a day. Tip from GO BLUE: reduce flushes, where possible. Additionally, you can adapt your existing toilet by installing water-saving devices or replace it with an ultra-low-volume toilet.ⁱⁱⁱ If everyone in Canada installed a low-flush toilet, we'd save about 25,000 Olympic swimming pools of water, annually.^{iv}
- **Lawn watering and rain barrel use:** Canadians, on average, water their lawns 1.5 times a week in the summer months. Regionally, British Columbians water their lawns the most, an average of two times per week. The majority of Canadians (86%) believe that using a rain barrel in their garden is important, but less than half (43%) say they are actually using rain barrels. Only 25 per cent of all Canadians always use rain barrels. Tip from GO BLUE: turn off the hose and use a rain barrel. As a general rule, your lawn requires only two to three cm of water per week.ⁱⁱⁱ

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- **Fixing leaky faucets:** The majority of Canadians (84%) say that they repair (or replace) leaky faucets to help conserve water. Tip from GO BLUE: follow this example and fix leaky faucets; one drop per second from a leaky tap wastes about 10,000 litres of water a year.^v
- **Spending to save the planet:** Seven in ten Canadians say that fresh water conservation is influencing their purchasing decisions. The majority of Canadians (76%) are willing to spend a little more, about 10 per cent, for environmentally-friendly products.

“We hope Canadians will visit **goblue.org** and find out more about what they can do to save water,” says MacLeod. “If we each do our part, we can help sustain our fresh water for generations to come.”

About the Survey

These are some of the results of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted online with a sample of 2,309 adult Canadians. The survey was conducted from January 25 to January 30, 2008. The results are considered accurate to within +/- 2.0% 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire adult population in Canada been polled. The data were weighted according to census data to mirror the demographic composition of Canada.

About Unilever

Unilever, one of the world's largest consumer products companies, adds vitality to life by meeting everyday needs for nutrition, hygiene and personal care. Every day, 160 million people choose Unilever brands to feed their families and to clean themselves and their homes.

Unilever is best known in Canada by brands such as Bece[®], Lipton[®], Red Rose[®], Slim-Fast[®], Hellmann's[®], Knorr[®], Breyers[®], Popsicle[®], Bertolli[®], Sunlight[®], AXE[®], Vaseline[®], Vim[®], Q-Tips[®], Dove[®], Suave[®], Sunsilk[®], and Degree[®]. Unilever employs almost 2000 people across Canada and generated sales of just over C\$1.3 billion in 2007.

With a steadfast commitment to water sustainability, Unilever strives to lead by example and remains committed to further reducing its water footprint. Since 1995, Unilever has reduced its water use per tonne of production by over 50 per cent worldwide, despite increasing both the number of products manufactured and their volume. For eight years running, Unilever has been acknowledged as the food industry category leader on the Dow Jones Sustainability Index for their environmental policies and for the fourth year running Unilever was named amongst the 'Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations in the World' by Corporate Knights and Innovest, an international finance and investment advisory firm. Unilever is also an active participant in several water sustainability programs across Canada including Evergreen and EcoVoyageurs. For more information, visit www.unilever.ca.

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GO BLUE and the Youth of Canada

As part of the GO BLUE initiative, Unilever Canada is inviting Canadian youth to sit on a national committee as a GO BLUE Youth Ambassador, representing their community and empowering Canadians to get serious about water conservation. Information about how to apply can be found at www.unilever.ca. Applications and supporting documentation are due by April 30, 2008.

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VNR satellite coordinates:

English and French Video News Release feeding at 11:00 – 11:30 and again at 14:00 – 14:30 Eastern

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For a copy of the IPSO Reid poll on Canadians personal water habits, or to arrange an interview with a water expert or representative of GO BLUE please contact:

Ontario/Eastern Canada

Kate Hanna/ Beth Lockley
416-848-1404/ 416-848-1385

khanna@national.ca/ blockley@national.ca

Québec

Roch Landriault
514-843-2345

rlandriault@national.ca

Western Canada

Erin Hochstein
604-691-7394

ehochstein@national.ca

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References:

ⁱ Environment Canada. Household reclaimed water. Accessed on March 25, 2008. http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/water-eau/reclaim-recycle/index_e.html

ⁱⁱ Green Living Magazine 'Ask the Eco-Geek' column. April 11, 2007 issue. Accessed on April 4, 2008. <http://www.greenlivingonline.com/EcoGeek/ask-the-eco-geek-dishwasher-vs-handwashing-2/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Environment Canada. Water Conservation Tips. Accessed on April 11, 2008 http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/reseau/watertips/watertips_e.html.

^{iv} Zerofootprint Canada. Statistics. April 10, 2008.

^v Pollution Probe. Drinking Water Policies and Problems. Accessed on April 11, 2008. <http://www.pollutionprobe.org/Publications/chap6-end.pdf>. page 68.