

Torontonians are clear: Keep Toronto water public

New polling shows 60 per cent of people in Toronto don't want Toronto Water privatized

TORONTO – Following TCEU Local 416's sounding the alarm on Brad Bradford's plan that could lead to the privatization of Toronto Water, new polling conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights shows that 60 per cent of Torontonians are worried about water being privatized.

"Brad Bradford's water plan would put the safety of Toronto's drinking water at risk and make service worse for the people of Toronto. Torontonians polled were clear: Bradford's plan has them very concerned," said Domenic Maugeri, President of TCEU Local 416. "Our members test and treat every drop of water the people of Toronto drink, and we repair the city infrastructure that it flows through. We cannot risk putting private interests ahead of public delivery of services when it comes to the water we drink."

When asked about Bradford's plan for Toronto Water and the possibility of Toronto Water being privatized in the future, 35 per cent of respondents said they were very concerned, 25 per cent of people polled said they were somewhat concerned and 8 per cent not sure.

Earlier this month, Bradford opened the door to the process of privatization of Toronto's water system by turning Toronto Water into a business corporation and making it borrow money to finance water services in Toronto. Under that plan, Toronto's water would be run by an unelected corporate board seeking to make a profit, not by city council accountable to residents. The Ontario government has the power to set the rules for that business board if it chooses to, which means the City of Toronto and Torontonians could have no say over who runs their water and no way to hold them to account or to budget.

"Walkerton should have taught us one thing: when it comes to safe water, strong public oversight and sustained investment are non-negotiable. Bradford's plan puts both at risk," added Mark Hancock, President of CUPE National. "We've seen this story before. When essential public services are handed over to private interests, profit comes first and the public pays the price through cuts and declining service. Water is too important to put at risk."

In addition to the polling, a new legal analysis from Goldblatt Partners LLP explains how Bradford's plan to create a new business corporation under the Ford Government's *Water and Wastewater Public Corporations Act* could give control away of Toronto's water and pave the way for rate hikes, underinvestment and a future sell-off. The analysis found:

- Bradford's statement that a new water corporation will always be 100 per cent owned by Toronto taxpayers is "highly misleading" and notes that if the Province chooses to wholly or partially privatize the corporation, Toronto will have no power to stop it.
- Under Doug Ford's legislation, the Province has water rate-setting powers so any promise of savings and rate reductions could be over-ruled or changed by the provincial government, so promises of lower rates are misleading as well.

- The Ford Government retains powers to exercise significant control over the ownership, governance, management and operations of water and wastewater business corporations. They have the ultimate authority over who sits on the board and the terms and conditions of the provision of water services.

“Under Bradford’s agenda, Toronto would lose the power to set rates and decide what gets fixed. Every important decision about our water would be handed to Doug Ford’s government, and the result would be higher bills, less safety and, before long, a sale to the bidder with the best connections,” said Nas Yadollahi, President of CUPE Local 79. “He is promising lower water bills today by cutting the money that keeps our water clean and flowing, and Torontonians would pay for it later with bigger bills and a system in worse shape. The water we drink is too important to gamble with.”

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About the polling: Pollara Strategic Insights surveyed 702 Toronto adults online from October 6 to 11, 2026, commissioned by CUPE 416. Results are weighted by gender, age, and region. As an online panel sample, no margin of error applies; a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 3.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

About TCEU Local 416: Local 416 represents over 6,000 City of Toronto outside workers and paramedics, including the operators, mechanics and technicians who run Toronto's water and wastewater system.

About CUPE Local 79: CUPE Local 79 is Canada’s largest municipal local, representing approximately 32,000 workers who deliver the public services Torontonians rely on every day, from long-term care and public health to shelters and ambulance dispatch. At Toronto Water, Local 79 members help keep the city’s water safe by testing wastewater, responding to contaminations, and assisting the public with water related concerns.