Engaging in the Deliberative Policy Analysis Process for Water Justice in Canada

Navigating the Future Waters of Public Administration

Anna Wilson, University of Alberta

From 2014 to 2017 the World Economic Forum (WEF) identified water-related illnesses as one of the top five major global risks to human health (Adeel, 2017). Unfortunately, this has not impeded the war on science with United States (U.S.) President Donald Trump closing the Environmental Protection Agency and the former Canadian Conservative Government closing Canada's Ocean and Fisheries Library and ending Canada's Navigable Waters Protection Act (Mitchell, 2017). Despite Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's promise to protect Indigenous lands, he approved the Kinder Morgan Pipeline Project as 12 year-old Autumn Peltier broke down in tears pleading with him not to let them build a pipeline on her home in Wikwemikong First Nation land in Ontario (Lau, 2016). Prime Minister Trudeau promised Autumn that he would protect the water and this promise has made national headlines. Deliberative policy analysis can make Trudeau's promise Canada's national water policy. Deliberative Policy Analysis (DPA) can be defined as a process in which policy analysts carefully consider the: "stakeholders [and citizens'] value differences, dialogue, argumentation, and deliberation as major targets of analysis to determine a policy outcome (Li, 2015) through one of the three models of DPA: 1. mediation and stakeholder group engagement, 2. citizens' forums, or 3. citizens' initiatives and referendums (Smith, 2003, p. 77). This paper defends the urgency of Canada adopting a deliberative federal water policy that follows World Health Organization (WHO) water policy guidelines.