

Sent: Saturday, February 02, 2002 2:07 PM
Subject: TOP SCIENTISTS PREDICT MORE DEATHS

Environment - 1/29/2002 12:32:48 PM

Top scientist fears more water contamination deaths

EDMONTON, ALBERTA — A leading scientist fears there may be more deaths from water contamination in Canada before politicians move to protect the country's water supply.

David Schindler, a world-renowned water expert, was a keynote speaker yesterday, 28 January, at a Global Water Crisis forum in Edmonton. He said that despite the highly publicized deadly outbreak of *E. coli* in Walkerton, Ontario in 2000 that struck 2,300 people and killed seven, governments are still cutting environmental protection budgets, the Canadian Press (CP) reported.

He said he had hoped the Walkerton tragedy would force governments to recognize the need to protect watersheds, but following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States, federal resources went largely into airport security, CP said.

A subsequent downturn in the economy prompted some provinces, to cut their budgets. Meanwhile, water quality in the most populated regions of Canada continues to wane, he said, according to the news service.

Schindler says Canada has had the science for decades to protect and restore its water supply, but no one has taken the initiative to implement it, the news report said.

Alberta Environment spokesperson Val Mellesmoen said in response that her province recognizes the looming water crisis and is moving on a long-term strategy, CP reported.