

Vital climate change warnings are being ignored, say experts in Science

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Canada's inland waters, the countless lakes and reservoirs across the country, are important "sentinels" for climate change and Ottawa and the provinces are ignoring the warnings. That's the message from University of Alberta biologist David Schindler and colleagues in a paper to be released Feb. 12, 2009, in the prestigious publication, *Science*.

Schindler is a co-author of *Sentinels of Change*, which reviewed papers addressing the effects of climate change revealed in numerous long-term studies presented at a conference last September.

In his paper, Schindler highlighted studies that have shown that Canada and the United States will have to rethink plans to use the Laurentian Great Lakes as an emergency water supply if a dramatic shortage befalls North America in the future. Data collected by researchers indicate the water balance in the Laurentian Great Lakes is precarious because it is only renewing itself at the rate of less than one per cent a year.

Schindler and his co-authors also analyze a study involving carbon emissions. "Recent studies show that lakes release very high releases of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, in many cases higher than the surrounding forests in the same watersheds. This has been missed in climate modeling to date."

Schindler says more inland water studies are needed in Canada because they provide valuable data on water levels, carbon cycles, acid rain and the frequency of forest fires. There are three long-term inland water

studies in Canada, all of them in Ontario. Schindler is calling for more funding and expansion of the research program.

Source: University of Alberta

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