

For immediate release

CO-OPERATORS RENEWS COMMITMENT TO BUILDING FLOOD RESILIENCE

Multi-year funding will help Canadians adapt to, prepare for and mitigate the significant risks of flooding

GUELPH, ON (May 19, 2022) – Co-operators has renewed its multi-year funding commitment to Partners for Action (P4A), a research initiative at the University of Waterloo that focuses on empowering Canadians to become flood resilient, with a three-year commitment of \$500,000 towards program delivery and research.

The increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather and its devastating impacts are top of mind for Canadians after the severe flooding in British Columbia late in 2021, and more recently the flooding in Manitoba. It's never been more important to prepare for a flood-prone future, yet a [2020 survey conducted by Partners for Action](#) revealed that only six per cent of Canadians living in flood risk zones were aware of their risk.

“People, communities and municipalities have to be empowered to enact change in the places they live, where the risks are the greatest,” said **Jean Andrey, Dean, Faculty of Environment at the University of Waterloo**. “Our continuing partnership with Co-operators supports the heart of this work and allows us to build deeper, impactful connections across Canada.”

P4A brings together governments, researchers, businesses, and communities to better understand flood risk. Their focus is on positioning flood resiliency as a pathway toward climate action, climate adaptation and climate justice, and prioritizing research and tools – like its Social Vulnerability Index, policy work on managed retreat, and a study on inclusive risk communication – that can help inform and catalyze inclusive resilience.

“Whether it’s catastrophic flooding like we saw in BC last fall, or extreme rainfall and flooding like we are currently seeing in Manitoba, we’re at a point where collaborative and coordinated efforts are critical,” said Shawna Peddle, AVP of Citizenship at Co-operators (and former Director of P4A), who is moderating a panel discussion on climate change implications for vulnerable populations at the [CatIQ Connect Forum](#) on June 9, 2022. “We just can’t afford to leave people behind. We believe P4A can play an important role in catalyzing equitable, community-level flood resiliency at the same time as creating an evidence-base for how we’ll need to adapt over the decades to come.”

This funding commitment brings the total support from Co-operators for P4A to \$1.7 million since the research initiative’s 2015 launch. Learn more about P4A’s research activities in its [2021 Annual Report](#).

About Co-operators

Co-operators is a leading Canadian financial services co-operative, offering multi-line insurance and investment products, services, and personalized advice to help Canadians build their financial strength and security. The company has more than \$61.5 billion in assets under administration. Co-operators has been providing trusted guidance to Canadians for the past 76 years. The organization is well known for its community involvement and its commitment to sustainability. Achieving carbon neutral equivalency in 2020, the organization is committed to net-zero emissions in its operations and investments by 2040, and 2050, respectively. Co-operators is also ranked as a Corporate Knights' Best 50 Corporate Citizen in Canada and is listed among the Best Employers in Canada by Kincentric. For more information, please visit: www.cooperators.ca.

About P4A

P4A empowers Canadians to become flood resilient by promoting awareness and preparedness actions that are inclusive and evidence based. Partnership is central to our approach: strategic collaborations allow us to focus on changing the flood response landscape at the ground level and with policymakers. As a thought leader and steward of Flood Smart Canada, P4A moves conversation and multi-level action forward by localizing community-engaged flood risk awareness and preparedness, partnering for adaptation, and developing flood resilience planning and foresight. These priorities will enable communities to access effective resources and innovative research, and ultimately, embrace inclusive resilience. For more information, please visit: www.uwaterloo.ca/partners-for-action.

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Glossary:

Inclusive Resilience: Resilience is the ability to prepare for and recover from disasters. To take an inclusive approach, we must recognize that different groups of people need different emergency response measures. Inclusive resilience ensures all people have an opportunity to make meaningful contributions to decision making, planning and response efforts. P4A is currently working with the Canadian Red Cross on a research study to determine how people learn about and prepare for floods, wildfires and earthquakes in their communities. The goal of the study is to improve communications and engagement with populations who are at higher risk of impacts from disasters and promote approaches, tools and actions that contribute to inclusive disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

Managed Retreat: Within the coming decades, millions of people around the globe will lose their homes to climate change. Managed retreat is the purposeful relocation of people and property out of areas vulnerable to flooding – which is achieved primarily through the public acquisition of exposed structures. While managed retreat is institutionalized in other jurisdictions such as Australia and the United States, it's a relatively nascent policy in Canada. To implement buyouts effectively, decision-makers require evidence-based policy advice about how to design programs that maximize economic efficiency, political viability and social acceptability.

Social Vulnerability Index (SoVI): A SoVI provides analysis on socio-economic vulnerability and can be combined with other data sets, like hazard maps, so we can design policies that improve flood resilience at the community level. This helps to ensure that the most socially vulnerable populations who are disproportionately affected by flooding are provided with emergency management resources for preparedness, response, and recovery.