



Crystal Springs / Harbour Colony Lagoon Public Hearing: Speech delivered by – Mayor Kevin Chudd

Rural Municipality of Gimli – Representing the 2026 Council
April 22, 2026 – 1:00 p.m. - 10140 PR 213, Fraserwood, Manitoba

OPENING

Good day Commissioners, Members of the Panel, and participants.

My name is Kevin Chudd, Mayor of the Rural Municipality of Gimli.

I am speaking today on behalf of the 2026 Council — but more importantly, I am here on behalf of the people who live downstream, who love this water, and who have entrusted us with its care.

Today is World Earth Day — a day recognized around the globe as a reminder that our relationship with land and water is not optional, incidental, or transactional, but essential. Earth Day asks us to pause and reflect — to remember that decisions involving water do not end with permits or boundaries. They carry forward, often for generations.

Before we talk about regulations, infrastructure, or compliance, I want to talk about people. And before we proceed, I respectfully ask that we take a moment of silence, in recognition of World Earth Day, and in honour of the land, the water, and all who depend upon it — past, present, and future.

Moment of Silence

Thank you.

To ground today's discussion, I would like to share a short video that reflects our shared relationship with water and place:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6u8Jg7EyQ8>

This video tells a story — not just of land and water, but of understanding passed down through generations.



Crystal Springs / Harbour Colony Lagoon Public Hearing: Speech delivered by – Mayor Kevin Chudd

Long before municipal borders existed, Indigenous Peoples lived in relationship with these waters, guided by respect, restraint, and responsibility. Water was not something to control, but something to protect — because life flowed from it.

Later, early settlers came to this place and learned many of the same lessons. They relied on wetlands, creeks, and the lake not only for survival, but for identity and community. They learned — often through hardship — that when water is harmed, communities pay the price.

Those original wetlands were not accidental.

They were powerful natural systems that filtered water, slowed runoff, protected Lake Winnipeg, and sustained life — human and non-human alike.

Over time, we altered those systems. We drained them. We redirected them. And in doing so, we lost much of the natural protection they provided.

Gimli's Wetland Initiative is our community's effort to acknowledge that history — to say that we have learned something, and that we are willing to do better.

It is about restoration.

It is about humility.

It is about responsibility.

And it is grounded in a truth we all share:

What happens upstream does not stay upstream.

This hearing is not just about a lagoon.

It is about whether we have truly listened to the lessons of the past — and whether we are prepared to carry that responsibility forward.

THIS IS NOT ABOUT OPPOSING DEVELOPMENT

Let me be very clear.

This is not about opposing development.



Crystal Springs / Harbour Colony Lagoon Public Hearing: Speech delivered by – Mayor Kevin Chudd

Gimli supports development — when it is responsible, coordinated, and rooted in respect for people and place.

Our concern today is not whether development should happen.

It is whether development of this scale is being asked to proceed before the foundation of trust, planning, and collaboration is in place.

This hearing is not simply about technical compliance.

It is about whether we are prepared to apply science and common sense together, before approval — not after downstream impacts occur.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Gimli is guided by both common sense and science.

We believe the two must operate together.

Science without collaboration is incomplete.

Process without common sense fails the public.

Council's approach is guided by three principles:

- Protect Lake Winnipeg — not just as a resource, but as a living system
- Protect the present, while planning responsibly for future generations
- Be guided by science, common sense, and meaningful collaboration

From our perspective, this process has not been collaborative.

When collaboration is missing, trust erodes.

And when trust erodes, decisions about water lose their legitimacy.

FAILURE OF MEANINGFUL CONSULTATION

Meaningful collaboration should have included — from the outset:

- First Nations
- Métis communities



Crystal Springs / Harbour Colony Lagoon Public Hearing: Speech delivered by – Mayor Kevin Chudd

- The commercial fishing community
- Fishing habitant downstream
- The Willow Creek Watershed District
- Downstream municipalities, including Gimli

These are not peripheral stakeholders.

They are rights holders, knowledge holders, stewards, and people whose culture, health, and livelihoods are directly tied to this watershed.

Their absence is not a procedural oversight.

It is a substantive failure.

REGIONAL CONTEXT – WATER CONNECTS US ALL

The RM of Gimli is both:

- A downstream municipality, and
- A direct neighbour to the proposed project

This proposal has advanced as though impacts end at a boundary.

Anyone who lives near water knows that is never true.

Water moves.

Nutrients move.

Impacts move.

Willow Creek flows into Lake Winnipeg — and into the lives of the people who depend upon it.

By extension, Siglávík, Húsavík, and other downstream communities are part of this same watershed and are already experiencing cumulative pressures.

These are not abstract places on a map.



Crystal Springs / Harbour Colony Lagoon Public Hearing: Speech delivered by – Mayor Kevin Chudd

They are where children learn to swim.

Where families fish.

Where elders walk the shoreline.

Where people find peace and belonging.

Gimli is not simply a commenting municipality.

We maintain downstream roads, drainage systems, and regional wastewater infrastructure.

These systems are finite, publicly funded, and belong to the people we serve.

They deserve protection in this decision.

RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT MEANS SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

This is not about saying no.

It is about saying not without clarity, not without agreements, and not without accountability.

Responsible development requires:

- Clear servicing capacity
- Defined responsibilities
- Cost-sharing agreements
- Accountability before impacts occur

None of those are in place today.

SERVICING CAPACITY – AN UNEVEN BURDEN

The RM of Armstrong has acknowledged it does not have the capacity to service this industrial-scale operation.

As a result, the burden shifts downstream — onto Gimli.

Onto our roads.

Onto our drainage systems.



Crystal Springs / Harbour Colony Lagoon Public Hearing: Speech delivered by – Mayor Kevin Chudd

Onto our wastewater infrastructure.

Onto our ratepayers.

There are no road agreements.

No drainage agreements.

No cost-sharing agreements.

That is not responsible planning.

DISCHARGE CRITERIA AND OPERATIONAL RISK

Evidence before the Commission confirms that this lagoon has not been designed to meet the current Lake Winnipeg ecological target, adopted in 2024.

Instead, the system has been designed to discharge at 1.0 milligram per litre of phosphorus, reflecting an older regulatory requirement, rather than the present-day target for Lake Winnipeg.

The current Lake Winnipeg target is 0.05 milligrams per litre.

That means this project is designed to operate at many times higher than what is now considered ecologically protective for the lake.

Designing new infrastructure today to outdated discharge criteria — particularly within an already stressed watershed — is deeply concerning, to say the least.

This concern is compounded by the manner in which discharge is controlled.

It was acknowledged that discharge rates are manually adjusted, based on visual checks, with valves opened and revisited after the fact. Discharge is not precisely controlled, and over-discharge is possible.

That is not a theoretical concern.

That is an acknowledged operational reality.

When outdated discharge criteria are combined with the absence of any cumulative watershed impact assessment, the implications are alarming.



Crystal Springs / Harbour Colony Lagoon Public Hearing: Speech delivered by – Mayor Kevin Chudd

The cumulative effects on Willow Creek and the Lake Winnipeg watershed are unacceptable.

The Rural Municipality of Gimli would not permit or support a development of this nature within its own jurisdiction under these conditions, and downstream communities should not be expected to absorb risks that upstream approvals would not tolerate locally.

COMPLIANCE IS NOT THE SAME AS PROTECTION

Evidence made clear that lagoon discharge compliance and Lake Winnipeg basin targets are being treated as though they are the same.

They are not.

Regulatory limits assess performance facility by facility.

Lake Winnipeg targets exist to address cumulative impacts across the entire watershed.

Relying solely on compliance with outdated discharge limits ignores the real drivers of lake degradation.

This approach satisfies a permit — but it does not protect a lake.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS WERE NOT ASSESSED

It was acknowledged that:

- Provincial guidelines do not assess cumulative watershed effects
- Compliance is considered lagoon by lagoon
- No analysis was conducted to determine how this discharge contributes to overall nutrient loading in Lake Winnipeg

This was not because cumulative impacts are unimportant — but because they were not requested.

Willow Creek is already stressed.

Lake Winnipeg is already impaired.



Crystal Springs / Harbour Colony Lagoon Public Hearing: Speech delivered by – Mayor Kevin Chudd

Designing new infrastructure without assessing cumulative effects is not precautionary.

It is procedural.

CLOSING – A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY AND A FUTURE DECISION

In closing, I return to first principles.

Development is not the issue.

Responsibility is.

Responsibility to those who came before us.

Responsibility to those who live here today.

Responsibility to the children who will inherit the consequences of our decisions.

Lake Winnipeg is not just a body of water.

It is our history.

Our livelihood.

Our shared future.

On World Earth Day, we are reminded that stewardship is not about doing the minimum required today — but about doing what is right for tomorrow.

Ultimately, this decision rests with the Minister.

We respectfully submit that the Minister has both the authority and responsibility to do the right thing for the environment and for Lake Winnipeg — to look beyond narrow compliance, to assess cumulative and downstream impacts, and to make a decision guided by foresight and care.

The Minister has the ability to require stronger analysis, meaningful collaboration, and a better alignment with current lake targets — and to make the right future decision for the watershed, the lake, and the communities that depend upon them.

That is not anti-development.

That is leadership.



Crystal Springs / Harbour Colony Lagoon Public Hearing: Speech delivered by – Mayor Kevin Chudd

That is stewardship.

Thank you for listening.

Thank you for reflecting.

And thank you for the weight you carry in making this decision.

End.