

NorMan Regional Development Corporation
Wuskwatim Presentation to the Clean Environment Commission
March 23, 2004
Presented By: Bruce Krentz - General Manager

Hello, I am Bruce Krentz and I am the General Manager for the NorMan Regional Development Corporation. It is my pleasure to be here today to lend support for the proposed development of the Wuskwatim Generating Station and related transmission facilities.

My presentation today will contain information on: who our organization are, what we feel the benefits to the region will be, why we feel this is a positive project and finally some of our concerns.

WHO WE ARE

I am here on behalf of the NorMan Regional Development Corporation at the request of our Board of Directors who passed a resolution at our semi annual meeting in September of 2003, in Thompson that reads.

- "Upon motion made by Mayor Dulewich; seconded by Councillor Kolada, it was resolved and carried that:
- WHEREAS Norman Regional Development Corporation's mission is to promote economic development within the Norman region,
- AND WHEREAS the proposed Wuskwatim Generating Station is viewed by NorMan RDC as having a positive economic impact on northern Manitoba and Manitoba as a whole;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT NorMan RDC go on record as supporting the development of the Wuskwatim Generating Station and that the General Manager draft a presentation to be delivered at the Clean Environment Commission hearings concerning this project in March 2004.

That is great but who exactly do we represent and what is our mandate?

The NorMan Regional Development Corporation is a community and provincially funded regional based corporation who serve people and communities north of the 53rd parallel here in Manitoba. Our mission as per our mission statement is to:

- Promote and encourage economic development north of the 53rd parallel in Manitoba.
- Assist and co-operate with Municipal, Provincial and Federal Governments as well as with other organizations in planning and creating economic development in our region."

Because the project will bring dollars and resources to the region it relates closely to our mission, so the project and the process are of interest to us.

We are an organization who are partially funded by member communities and businesses, the remainder of our funding comes through the provincial government.

- We have 10 member communities north of the 53rd parallel including Thompson, Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake, Gillam, Churchill, Flin Flon, The Pas, Snow Lake, The R.M. of Kelsey and Grand Rapids. Each of those communities have two representatives on our board of directors.
- We have corporate members as well who include: INCO, HBM&S, Tolko Industries, Manitoba Hydro, Stittco, Skyward Aviation Ltd. Acres Ltd., and Calm Air. Each of the corporate members have a representatives who attend our Board meetings as well.
- Finally we have representation from a number of government departments including Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Culture Heritage and Tourism, Keewatin Community College, Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Communities Economic Development Fund, the Northern Regional Cabinet Office and Conservation.

As you can see we are proud to represent a variety of sectors and interests from across the North with a focus on Economic Development and projects that strengthen the future of the North.

BENEFITS TO THE REGION

We feel this is one of those projects and feel it will benefit the North in a number of ways.

The capital development will be a definite benefit to the North. We feel that, that capital development will not only benefit the Thompson and NCN areas but will benefit a larger part of the region as the supplies will travel through many communities in the North. Also business and service providers through the region will be called on to assist in the development that will happen. Obviously the greatest benefit will come to the communities closest to the project but as a region the members of the NorMan Regional Development Corporation are impressed with the opportunities for us as a whole.

The training and education that will happen around the project is another benefit that we are impressed with. Again it is both the obvious and the spin-off benefits we see as an advantage to the. The training that will take place to ready people for construction and the start-up of the generating station and the related facilities is great for the work force. The positive spin-off that we see is a better trained workforce for the north. Even if the skills are not directly related to some of our other large industries such as mining or forestry we still end up with a larger force of people who were in the industrial workforce and are now employable.

Construction is an obvious benefit that I will not spend too much time on but will say that to an organization interested in economic development a project that is

budgeted at 900 million dollars looks to us like a good boost for the economy in our region. The money spent not only on the actual facilities but the money spent in the region by the people doing the construction and people related to the project will be a positive for many of the communities and people providing service on the routes in and out of as well as around the project.

There will be some on-going employment once the project is complete. While the numbers required to operate and maintain the facilities are not huge it is a good thing for the region to have those permanent positions.

As the project stands right now, if NCN do invest and own part of the generating station, the on-going benefits to the community will be significant. Again the benefit will be greatest to the citizens of NCN but more money in the region is a benefit to all of us.

POSITIVE IMPACTS

There are a number of things we would call positive impacts or aspects of the project and, the process in place to complete the project, that we feel are positives. The first of those being that if completed the generating station and related facilities will provide a more stable power supply for residents and business in the North and across Manitoba. Our large industries such as Mining and Forestry rely very heavily on Hydro electricity and a more stable supply and increased potential for the future is a strong support.

In the recent past we have seen some mine closures in places like Leaf Rapids and Lynn Lake and have some uncertainty in Forestry. We see the establishment of an on-going stable development as a positive step for the future of the North. While Hydro is already established in the North we are encouraged by an industry who are growing while others shrink. We welcome any development which can fill the gaps, or better yet increase the economy in the North and we see this as a step toward that.

From a business perspective we feel it makes sense to bring the generating station on-line early and to use sales of that power to pay down the debt on the project before Manitoba has a need to use that power itself.

We feel that Hydro and NCN are undertaking a responsible process by involving local input and doing comprehensive impact studies. We believe that this not only ensures the success of the project but sets a standard for future resource development in the North. The process we are involved in here sets a standard or at the very least sets us on a path for reviewing all Hydro and other resource development projects in the future. We feel that is a very positive by-product of this project.

As an organization we are satisfied with the plans to continue to manage environmental impacts such as, the areas that will be flooded and wildlife

resource access. We applaud the move to a low head dam to minimize flooding and the way that decision was made in consultation with local residents.

CONCERNS

While we are in favour of the project as a whole we do have some concerns or areas that we feel must be attended to and stay attended to in order to protect the North and in order for the project to be considered a success.

We feel the construction phase of the project will put pressure on some of the service industries in the North especially those in NCN and in Thompson but also in all areas that the supplies and people will travel. There will be a social problems in relation to more people and more money moving around in the region but we feel that if communities are aware ahead of time the issues can be managed.

We are concerned about environmental impacts as a whole but are also satisfied that they are being managed through the Environmental Impact Study. We would be naïve in thinking there will not be an impact but we do feel the process is sound, the impacts are being assessed and managed and that the benefits to the region are worthwhile.

Wildlife resources could see pressure from increased accessibility. This is another area that can be managed but our concern is just that it is managed both as the area is opened to access and in the future when the project is no longer first in the public's eye.

A large concern also is the displacement of local people who use the area for hunting and trapping. There is always some cost to new projects and new directions and we are comfortable with that but we want to be sure the concerns, lifestyles and economies of the people who use the area of the proposed generating station and the related transmission facilities are addressed.

SUMMARY

In Summary I would say that being an organization interested in Economic Development we feel compelled to support a project that will see an estimated 900 Million dollars flow to our region. We do not blindly support the project but do feel comfortable with the process that the major players in the process have embarked upon.

We like the fact that the project includes participation from local people and specifically NCN. We feel there is a great opportunity for NCN to benefit in terms of financial gains and an increase in human resources. Those benefits and others will be felt in Thompson and throughout the region and as a regional organization we look forward to that.

Those financial gains to the region will be positive but we are also interested in the training and education that will support industry as a whole in the North.

We only support the project if the Environmental Impact Study continues on the path it has begun and if the impacts on the environment are managed not only before and during construction but through the life of the Generating station and the transmission lines and facilities.

We commend the Government of Manitoba for dedicating resources to the process and for taking steps to ensure that the project is carried forward in this responsible manner.

I spoke on who we are as an organization, what we felt the benefits to the region will be, why we feel this is a positive project and finally some of our concerns. On behalf of the NorMan Regional Development Corporation, it's member communities and corporations and government partners I would like to thank you for your time and the opportunity for us to show our support for the Wuskwatim Generating Station and related Transmission Facilities.

