



Northern Association of Community Councils Inc.

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WESTERN REGION

Baden
Barrows
Camperville
Crane River
Dawson Bay
Duck Bay
Mallard
Meadow Portage
National Mills
Pelican Rapids
Powell
Red Deer Lake
Rock Ridge
Salt Point
Spence Lake
Waterhen

NORTHERN REGION

Brochet
Cormorant
Cross Lake
Easterville
God's Lake Narrows
Granville Lake
Herb Lake Landing
Ilford
Moose Lake
Nelson House
Norway House
Oxford House
Pikwitonei
Sherridon
South Indian Lake
Thicket Portage
Wabowden

EASTERN REGION

Aghaming
Berens River
Bissett
Dallas-Red Rose
Dauphin River
Fisher Bay
Harwill
Homebrook
Island Lake
Little Grand Rapids
Loon Straits
Manigotagan
Matheson Island
Pine Dock
Princess Harbour
Red Sucker Lake
Seymourville

Good morning/afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Commissioners.

My name is Reg Meade and I am appearing before you today as the President of the Northern Association of Community Councils, or as most people like to refer to us, NACC.

Like many northerners, I wear a number of hats; I am also the mayor of the community of Wabowden. I also participate on a number of committees that work to advance the social and economic well-being of northern Manitoba communities.

Before focusing my comments on the NACC's views related specifically to Wuskwatim, I believe it would be useful to provide a brief background on our organization, who we represent, and our goals and objectives.

The NACC is an association that serves the interests of approximately 50 Community Councils in Northern Manitoba, ranging from Brochet in the far northwest, to Bissett in the east and to the south, several between Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis.

Our communities fall within the jurisdiction of the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs of the government of Manitoba. Through the Mayors and Councilors of our member communities, we represent as many as 30,000 people in the north, the majority of who are of Aboriginal descent.

I should point out that a number of the community councils we represent have are located in proximity to the proposed Wuskwatim developments. These include Nelson House, Wabowden, Thicket Portage, Moose Lake and Cormorant.

NACC's goals are to promote and encourage wherever possible the development of local government; and to assist in the improvement of services and the physical, social and economic development of all member northern communities of the NACC. That is why we are here before you today.

There has been an extensive public consultation related to Wuskwatim. Several of our member community councils have participated in these meetings to make known the interests and concerns of our communities. While this should be obvious, I would like to emphasize that as the elected local government representatives of these communities, we have a responsibility to speak on behalf of our communities on matters that may affect them or that are important to our futures, and we have done so.

NACC has held a long-term interest in fostering local development that will yield favourable and long-term economic benefits to communities in Northern Manitoba. We believe Wuskwatim will do this. Wuskwatim will provide training and jobs during construction. The project will result in an expenditure of almost \$1 billion and this will create opportunities for northern business and generate a cash flow that will find its way into many of our communities. Once the

project has been completed, those who have received training will have upgraded skills that they can use to provide a better life for themselves and their families and there will be more carpenters, electricians, equipment operators, mechanics and other skilled people to help improve the living conditions in northern communities.

Looking farther into the future, with these new skills, perhaps our young people will not need to leave the north. Perhaps they will be able to move on to work on other hydro projects, in the mining industry or the forest industry or maybe they will provide locally services that we import from elsewhere. This will help to sustain our communities economically and enable our local councils to provide better services to our residents.

I must point out that historically, many major projects in the north typically did not employ any substantial numbers of northern inhabitants, particularly those of Aboriginal descent. That is why NACC believes it is essential that those people who are impacted by development should benefit and we look for Wuskwatim to benefit our communities.

We who live in the north understand all too well that developments like Wuskwatim can impact the environment. NACC is an umbrella political organization; we are not environmental experts. However, we do know that all human activity impacts our environment in one way or another. The important point is that these impacts be managed so as not to harm the environment's ability to serve future generations.

Many in our communities can remember when fishing and trapping were the economic backbones of our communities. We understand first hand the concept of sustainable resource use and we understand what is needed for a family's economic survival today. We look to your recommendations to ensure the impacts of Wuskwatim will be minimized and to enable the project to proceed to provide the benefits to our communities that I have spoken about earlier. With sound environmental practices we will be able to have the benefits of Wuskwatim as well as the continued development of local fishing industries, Aboriginal crafts industries, trapping, transportation, commercial construction, tourism and recreational development that also are key components of our local economies.

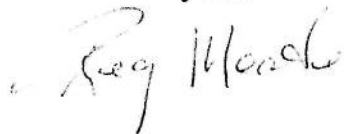
To conclude, I would like to share a couple of stories about NACC's participation in activities that may, on the surface seem totally unrelated to your review of the Wuskwatim development. But I think after hearing them, you will find them very useful as you deliberate about your recommendations to the Minister.

Recently, as part of the Bay Line Round Table, an organization promoting the interests of communities along the rail line to Churchill, a NACC representative traveled to Nunavut where we heard how they want a hydro line from Manitoba. This drives home how fortunate we in Manitoba are to have an abundant power resource that perhaps we take for granted. It also highlights the opportunities

we have to develop our resources not only to the benefit of our local economy but also other parts of Canada.

Second, last weekend I attended a Climate Change conference in Winnipeg. While I am not an environmental expert, I do understand hydropower can play a key role in the fight against climate change by providing renewable, clean energy for Manitoba and for customers in export markets who would otherwise burn coal and gas which are major green house gas producers. I believe Wuskwatim can produce environmental benefits when we consider the big picture.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Reg March". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed text "Thank you."