

Lake Winnipeg Regulation – Manitoba Hydro Clean Environment Commission Hearing
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Thank you, **Chairman Terry Sargeant**, for the opportunity **to speak** and for **chairing the hearing**.

A huge thank you goes out to the **Minister of the Conservation and Water Stewardship and Team** for **allowing all of us the opportunity to speak in regards to the Lake Winnipeg regulation and its impact** on the ecosystems and us!

My name is **Cheryl Kennedy Courcelles** and I live near **St. Adolphe, Manitoba along the Red River**, which is about 10 minutes south of the Red River floodway inlet structure. As a **Mother and a Sociologist** I'm here to speak to you this evening about the **negative effects** that we are currently **experiencing living under the Lake Winnipeg Regulation (LWR)**. I shall **speak on behalf of those who do not have a voice, be that our small children, our unborn children, our elderly and those of us whose spirit has been broken**. I speak **on behalf** of the **water energy** as well as all the **wildlife and ecosystems that live in the Lake Winnipeg water basin**.

What I know for sure is that **prior to 1970s Lake Winnipeg was a natural healthy lake**. The citizens of Manitoba and all of our abundant wildlife and ecosystems flourished and lived **in harmony with our sacred Lake Winnipeg** for the most part.

The rebounding affect of the receding glacier ice has had very little negative effects on the wellbeing and health of the lake, wildlife and ecosystems. The uplift has been gradual and peaceful allowing all life to coexist in a nonthreatening manner, quite opposite to Lake Winnipeg regulation.

Water is life! Water is sacred! We all know that without a good clean supply of drinking water we die, all life dies! Lake Winnipeg regulation has taken a divine natural resource, Water, the birthright of every Canadian citizen and has turned it into

an unhealthy state yet an economic source of income, our provincial cash cow so to speak! This is an immense burden/responsibility to put on the backs of the citizens of Manitoba and Canada. **Manitoba Hydro is not a clean energy source of power** as this CEC hearing has uncovered by all the brave citizens and organizations who have come forward to tell their truths. **The Lake Winnipeg regulation keeps Lake Winnipeg artificially at levels that it would not naturally be at. This artificial regulating of the lake has brought great harm and suffering to all life that lives down stream of the dams and the turbines. Keeping Lake Winnipeg at artificial high lake levels has also seen the killing and destruction of our critical lake habitat be that the marshes, beaches, shorelines and their ecosystems. And this leads to further destruction in fish, snails, clam, animal and bird species and their natural habitats. The Sturgeon cannot take advantage of cheaper hydro rates; the Sandpiper does not receive any flood mitigation when its nest and shoreline is washed away once again. We do not see the Caribou lining up to get a good hydro job, nor are the muskrats and beavers filing out forms to have their homes flood proofed again and again! What we do see is that these animals cannot predict what water energy is going to do anymore. The animal kingdom does not get our emails and tweets, media notices, government ads in the paper, radio and tv announcements that Hydro is once again going to operate its' artificial water moving infrastructures. They have no way of knowing this information, it is unnatural and their instincts and sacred knowledge leave them unprepared for the destructive force of artificial moving waters, especially when it happens in the time of the year when that water would not normally be moving up and down! We do not have the right to sacrifice the wildlife and ecosystems for economic short-term gain. The World is respectfully changing how we view the Animal Kingdom and their inherent rights. An Argentine Court ruled that an Orangutan has (some) Human Rights and is to be set free to live her life as naturally as she can! We shall see the World making great strides in the natural rights of all animals including the wildlife. I do recognize that Manitoba Hydro has done some mitigating on this critical matter but they certainly have much more funding to do in restoring the wildlife's habitat as well as in the education, research, development and protection practices of all species, large to small. For example, it has been scientifically proven that fish can feel and so to slowly freeze them in too shallow of water or to not set up the fish ladders and send them into the turbines to be ground up, is totally unacceptable management practices on behalf of our Crown Corporation, Manitoba Hydro! When we know better, we do better immediately!**

We do have a responsibility to the Aboriginal Peoples and their Treaty Rights to be good stewards of the land and waters. And our current artificial operating the lake at 711-715 asl is failing this responsibility. I foresee in our near future that all water rights shall belong to the Treaties all across Canada.

Future economic gains and the environmental sustainability of the sacred waters shall automatically include the Aboriginal Peoples, including Métis both in ownership and in consultations. As seen in the pages and pages of testimony from the LWR CEC hearing, the Aboriginal peoples commonly were NOT consulted when it came to water issues that would affect their livelihoods, language, culture and peaceful way of raising their families. LWR has failed the citizens of Manitoba and Canada.

Manitoba Hydro should not receive a permanent long-term license to operate. They shall stay with a temporary license until further consultation and mitigation/ownership with the First Nations has been properly and thoroughly done. And if a LWR permanent license is ever granted, it shall remain on a 5-year renewal basis until the life of the whole project is over, thus allowing all, Aboriginal Peoples, stakeholders and concerned citizens the right and opportunity to give feedback about its successes and failures. Thus allowing the ability and responsibility for change to happen for the good of all, especially for the water, wildlife and ecosystems.

The Manitoba Floodway Authority has a similar 5 year feedback best practices action plan that is proving to be a much better way of professionally and respectfully dealing with their artificial flooding mandates and operations. By providing an open-ended responsible line of respectful communication to be put in place by either Hydro and/or the Manitoba Government through the CEC shall help resolve some of the stressful and very scary tensions that currently exist be it in our Northern communities, at the LWR infrastructure locations or on our disappearing shorelines and marshes. Tempers flare when the people are not listened to and there is no reason for this by any Government party, department or Hydro operations or persons. It is important to apologize so healing can occur.

Points of Concern:

1. I agree with almost every presenter that has spoken to the CEC in regards to the affects the LWR is having on him or her and their way of life! **The Heart of the Continent and the Keepers of the Sacred Waters have been heard and I know that Chairman Terry Sargeant with the CEC and his Commissioners shall in the 21st century do right by all of these presenters.** I also believe that in the millennium and under our **current best management practices and environmental sustainability that our Governments shall also act in**

the best interests of society and the environment and not just for one industry any more!

2. **I totally agree with International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD) and Ducks Unlimited vision of how to help Manitoba Hydro with not only cleaner water in the reservoir but to also establish and re-establish land infrastructure reservoirs.** That will be critical not only in keeping the **lakes less toxic and more stable** so the LWR does not have to go up and down but to **also secure other sources of water in times of drought.** Right now we have all our eggs in one small draining damaged basket! **A Strategic Large Basin Management practices is the way of our sustainable healthy future!** It gives the citizens and ecosystems hope and a renewed energy to find harmony and profitability for all.
3. I agree with all the presenters who are asking for more **Science and Traditional Knowledge studies to be done on: LWR, Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba and their watersheds.** We are the Keepers of the Water and we owe it to our children's children times seven at the very least to restore the health and sustainability to our sacred waters.
4. **I do not understand why the Federal Government is not at these CEC hearings!** Both the **First Nations and navigate able waters fall under their domain?** I would like to see **another CEC hearing** involving both the **Federal Government and the International Joint Commission** in the near future, regarding our Manitoba environmentally sustainable waters.
5. I would like to see a **CEC public hearing regarding specifically the outflows of waters from any and all of Manitoba Hydro's infrastructure.** The good people of **Churchill** did not even know what LWR was! **Not to mention the possible negative affects of letting 50% more toxic water into Hudson Bay is going to do to the polar bears, seals, whales, birds, fish, wildlife, local communities** and so on! This hearing has only scratched the surface of the adverse affects that are happening to the outflows be they mitigated or not. We can no longer stick our heads into the disappearing sand bars and say we

did not know! **I would like to see a CEC hearing on more of Hydro's' operations and the state of the environment and citizens.**

6. I agree with **Dr. Gordon Goldsborough, Dr. Eva Pip, Vicki Burns, dear Charlie and all the concerned citizens and organizations that stand up for the marshes, our sacred wetlands, the kidneys of the lakes!** We have to forgive our past actions and ignorance and move on. We have to **fund wetland restoration sustainable practices as a top priority all over our province and country! Manitoba Hydro should be our number one supporter** in all these initiatives!
7. **I look forward to a CEC public hearing to be held about the LWR on Lake Manitoba** seeing how we are **artificially draining** it too to help secure Hydro's need of continued high water levels and hence a **second reservoir**. The Aboriginal Peoples, stakeholders and citizens on Lake Manitoba also have a right to be consulted and heard!
8. We have to do a better job of **providing Hydro employment opportunities and education to the people and communities around the Lakes, especially to those downstream of the operations. The numbers need to be reported to the follow up in 5 years.**
9. We have to do a better job of **providing all our communities with safe drinking water** especially those of whom LWR has negatively affected.
10. **Manitoba Hydro and the Federal Government have to do a better job of upgrading the Aboriginal homes and infrastructures** so that most of their monies are not being spent on hydro bills. Currently they are living under the most severe adverse effects of LWR and yet they have some of the **highest hydro bills** in the province! This is just plainly not correct and help is needed immediately.
11. **If LWR is adversely affecting the health and well being of a person, family, a community, and their very lives are in danger then they should be bought out** at fair market value.

12. **LWR is negatively affecting the financial worth of ones property and home around the lakes and rivers in its watershed and they need to be compensated by Hydro at fair market value.**
13. **I disagree that Hydro has had nothing to do with the inflows into the lake.** In the RM of Ritchot alone, you can see ads in the local paper offering community improvement funding paid by the Bi-Pole 3 initiative to projects that enhance drainage. This is **just one example of the different types of funding that Manitoba Hydro and every level of Government, including the Federal government has used to clear the land of surface water for the last four decades.**
14. I agree with **building resilient shoreline communities with further setback developments and larger riparian areas.** It is extremely important that **we put the WILD back into our habitats.**
15. **The Northern Flood Agreement needs to be honored and have follow up by a third party.** Manitoba Hydro has to remain accountable to its actions, promises and signed agreements.
16. **Adequate funding needs to be awarded to those communities who are downstream from the Hydro operations to which they can no longer safely continue to work, live and play in their traditional, spiritual and cultural ways.**
17. It is time that **we monitor the inflows and outflows of both lakes** as well as all of the Hydro infrastructures so that we get a better educated handle on exactly the amounts of water we are moving and when. **These records shall remain open to the public to review.**
18. **I strongly believe that LWR is adversely affecting the overall health and sustainability of Lake Winnipeg and soon to be Lake Manitoba** as well. The whole World can see what we have done via satellite images. **Shame on us!**
19. **LWR has negatively affected almost every way of making a living** on or around the Lake whether you are a farmer, fisher, hunter/trapper, small business owner, tourism and so forth.

20. I see a **bright future with Manitoba Hydro and the Governments funding projects that help store the water in land reservoirs, both big and small and economic for all.** The **faster we can hold back some water** from entering the lakes but yet still be available for hydro production and **climate change control, the faster we can get rid of Hydro's need to operate LWR so high.**
21. **I would like to see LWR operate at 711 to 713 asl** and if Mother Nature allows it to drop lower once or twice in a decade or two, we should allow it to happen for the overall rejuvenation of the entire ecosystems and wildlife habitat. **It is greedy and foolish of us to sacrifice our lake, ecosystems, wildlife and families to try and sell hydro futures of energy we cannot even store.** Those potential customers are realizing is not green energy in the very first place and do not want to be apart of destroying our sacred waters. Can we blame them, not! **Mega-sizing does not work; it fails in time, every time.**
22. **My family, community and myself are negatively affected by LWR** and its continual high lake level operations when Lake Winnipeg and or Lake Manitoba's levels exceed their natural capacity and start to move backwards either down the Red River and/or up the Assiniboine and there is a need to operate the Red River floodway inlet structure to hold water back from entering Winnipeg and in return it **artificially floods** the water onto those of us who live in the RM of Ritchoy and beyond. **My father and brother have decided not to commercially fish anymore because of the current dangers and lack of fish after 40 years of fishing.**
23. There should be at least one Commissioner or Chair, (preferably 25% of CEC workforce) that is of **Aboriginal decent, present in all CEC hearings, outings and a part of the CEC workforce.**
24. **LWR should be teaching society on how to save power in order to save the environment,** more teaching/marketing of a sustainability vision and actions is needed all over Manitoba and Canada.
25. **I wear a Red Dress today in honor of all of heart wrenching 1,200 missing Aboriginal Women and Girls.** I ask that every Manitoba

Hydro person and all people who live in the Lake Winnipeg Watershed, to ask questions, to look under every rock and in every ounce of water for them. It is time for answers, it is time we stand together united. The time has come to stop the abuse to all! May Peace be with you!

Thank you for the opportunity to share my knowledge and experiences with you. **I am grateful to each and every person who has participated in this LWR CEC hearing and especially to the Chairman Terry Sargeant and his passionate and talented team of Environmental Warriors, the Commissioners and Team!** We are all passionate about preserving our precious water and ecosystems, like: **our world-famous sand beaches that we share with the Endangered Sand Piper, or the millions of migratory birds and their nests, to saving the majestic caribou and our National Emblem, the sacred Beaver! Beaver stands for building, doing, for family, water and land energy, everything we value! We have to stop killing the beavers.**

We are generations who are too **in love with electricity** and have to learn and accept that **our actions are seriously harming our environment** by the choices we are making.

I have full faith in all who have come forward with this CEC hearing that **we can peacefully realign a successful sustainable vision and action plan for LWR**, our children are counting on us and our Grandparents know the way back to life before LWR! **Time for change is now, peace to all!**

Respectfully yours,

Cheryl Kennedy Courcelles

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