

**The Winnipeg River Property Owners Group Presentation to the Clean Environment Commission
Manitoba Hydro's Request for a Final License for Lake Winnipeg Regulation
March 11, 2015**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Commission today on behalf of the Winnipeg River Property Owners Group.

My name is Maurice Desautels and I represent the Winnipeg River property Owners group. Our group consists of property owners along the north shore of the Winnipeg River within approximately 2 km immediately downstream from the Pine Falls Generating Station.

We understand that the Clean Environment Commission has been asked by the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship to consult with communities about the impacts and effects of Lake Winnipeg Water Regulation by Manitoba Hydro, to report back to the Minister on the concerns from people, and provide recommendations about how to address these concerns.

We want to bring forward our concerns.

Our properties are in the immediate path of the water outflow and turbulence created by the dam's turbines and spillway. Our banks are high on the north shore and with the dam operation, particularly after enhancement of the dam's capacity in the 1990's all of our properties have sustained extensive damage.

Unlike properties further downstream and along the lake shores, our properties, in addition to being affected by wave action, wind forces and fluctuating water levels, are being eroded through constant undermining of our shorelines and banks by the swirling currents created by the dam, causing slumping of shorelines and making river water turbid and muddy.

Manitoba Hydro placed riprap along all of our property shores very early in the dam's life in the 1960's. This to us indicates that Manitoba Hydro is aware that their operation does significantly impact our properties. The riprap did not fix the problem.

Members of our group have approached Manitoba Hydro individually, on many occasions, since the early 1990's to plead for a solution or some form of assistance to save our land and homes. Hydro would send representatives based on these requests and we were usually told that other areas had priority or that there were no funds available at the time, leaving us thinking that our shorelines and river bank slope would eventually be repaired.

Some of us were offered assistance over the years in the form of attempts to stabilize the shoreline on their property and on one occasion an offer to purchase a property was made by Manitoba Hydro.

On February 12, 2015, after meeting with Hydro representative, twice in the previous two and half years as a Group, we received a formal letter from Manitoba Hydro stating that we will not be assisted in shoreline and bank repair or purchase. Their decision is based on the context of the Manitoba Water Power Act for the Pine Falls Generating Station, and our properties fall outside the limits of the Water Power Act license boundary. However, Manitoba Hydro by the same token did purchase properties outside of their license boundary just upstream from us because as they state: *"a failure on Manitoba Hydro's property had regressed onto adjacent private property, making the solution our responsibility"*.

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The erosion of our properties as a result of Manitoba Hydro's diversion of the natural flow of the Winnipeg River and manipulation of water levels has had the following impacts on us:

We live in fear and stress: Our properties have lost value because of erosion. It will be difficult to sell our homes and those that have sold in recent years have taken significant losses. Many of us invested in our properties as part of a retirement plan, and instead are now left with our investments ever dwindling.

When we look out our windows each day we are afraid to see more property fallen away. At times we are at risk of injury because of the river bank erosion and slope stability. For example when mowing the lawn along erosion lines, one of us rolled his lawnmower falling into a newly developed crevice in the ground. He was fortunate to not have been seriously injured. We do not feel safe letting our children and grandchildren play in our yards fearing they will fall into suddenly developed crevices formed by the erosion.

Manitoba Hydro's environment management policy states that they *"recognize their responsibility as caretakers of the economy and the environment for the benefit of present and future generations of Manitobans, and their responsibility to meet the electricity needs of present and future Manitobans in a manner that ensures the long term integrity and productivity of our economy, our environment and our natural resources and safeguards our human health"*

We, the Winnipeg River Property Owners Group feel that we are expected to sacrifice our homes, land, safety, health and life savings without compensation to satisfy the electricity and economic needs of the Province of Manitoba.

We ask that the Commission consider our situation and make recommendation to hold Manitoba Hydro responsible for damage to our shorelines and the environment as a condition of final licensing."

The Winnipeg River Property Owners Group

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Maurice and Linda Desautels
Murray and Suzie Steinke
Norman and Marcelle Coss
Fred and Rena Cure
Richard and Tammy Cure
Fred Jr and Amber Cure
Angela Enright
Richard and Friederike Ballantyne

Reference

Manitoba Hydro Environmental Management Policy. Policy # P850 revised 2012
Water Power Regulation (Government of Manitoba) <http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/regs/current/pdf-regs.php?reg=25/88%20R>