

**Manitoba Clean Environment Commission  
Keeyask Generation Project – Public Hearing**

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Dear Chairman Terry Sargeant, Panel Members, Ladies and Gentleman,

My name is Cheryl Kennedy Courcelles, and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of myself and my family as well as for all those who do not have a voice, like Mother Earth, the Animal Kingdom, Water energy, our unborn children and for all those whose spirit has been broken.

I have several Points of Concern that I would like to share with you today:

1. We need to take into greater utilization the Cree World View into the vision and operations of the Hydro electricity and the dams. They speak of Truths and Sacred Laws that have served them for all of time! We have lots to gain and even more to loose if we do not incorporate their teachings into our modern day ways. I am pleased with the Aboriginal ownership with this project.
2. It seems odd or convenient that the Woodland Caribou have been protected under the Species at Risk Act but yet it does not extend to the Keeyask area, a red flag for sure! What is our plan if the Caribou start to be negatively affected, will we really shut down the dam? What will we do?
3. Methylmercury levels in the Jack fish and Pickerel fish in Gull Lake shall take 30 years to return to current natural levels. How are these people going to feed themselves? How are they going to continue their culture? How are they going to teach their sons and daughters or grandchildren how to fish? As the fish become poisoned from the mercury and the human beings and wildlife start becoming sick from eating the fish, fishing will then end. Their culture and health will be sacrificed and the animal kingdom will suffer and may even vanish permanently from the area.
4. We need follow-up every 3 to 5 years with participants and the public with the CEC on all the CEC hearings.
5. Follow-up on all EIS and VEC commitments. i.e.: How are the common Knight Hawk, Rusty Black Bird, Fly Catcher, Lake Sturgeons, Moose, Bald Eagles, Frogs and the Caribou etc. How are they doing 3 years from now, 5 years, 10 years, 20 years and so on. In the Terrestrial Mitigation Implementation Plan: when does it start? Does it last for the life of the dam? What is the follow-up?

And the studies state that “the Caribou are not expected to have problems, but what is the plan if they do have problems?” What is our plan if the Sturgeon fry cannot survive their new locations?

6. Health concerns by impact of dams – Hydro operations – Northern Regional Health Authority – a precise action plan is needed to improve the services to the affected communities. We cannot leave it at the same old, same old, just not good enough for the grief that is going to hit them when these flood waters come and do not go away!
7. Financial help/training needs to be provided to the area, to help the residents to secure local employment for the life of the dam not just for the start of it.
8. Fresh food replacement programs due to mercury poisoning of their food chain could include such projects as: hydroponic greenhouses that operate in the winter too and not just in the summer: sharing and sending up to the communities the fish that our southern commercial fisherman are catching but have no market for, instead of those fish dying and being left on the ice for the birds or shorelines to rot.
9. Some question, the sustainability of who is going to use all of this power in the future? Will it just be Manitoba? Do we need to be building stronger relationships with Saskatchewan and Ontario as well as the United States? Are we careful to not promise what we cannot deliver?
10. If a community is too close to the actual dam or dam operations, for their own safety, they should be relocated and compensated for at fair market value and then some... for their obvious inconvenience and emotional harm done to them.
11. Due to the flooding from the dam operations, we have to take care and be accountable for the people, wildlife, fish and eco-systems first and foremost. If not for the sacrifices of these people, animals and Mother Nature, none of our water, hydro, energy would even exist in the first place.
12. Lake Sturgeons have been called the aquatic Bald Eagles, a title that touches our hearts and common sense of taking the responsibility for the Sturgeon’s very survival and sustainability. This is a sacred species that has been around for 300 million years, it belongs with the dinosaurs and yet here it is still with us. One can just imagine the close relationship the Aboriginal People have with this regal fish. The very survival and recovery program of the sacred Lake Sturgeon may well be some of the best conservation work Manitobans and Canadians will ever do! We may need hydro but we cannot lose, yet another species when we can do something about it. Long lives the Lake Sturgeon!

13. Concerns and recognition of the Métis People issues need to be addressed and not shuffled under paperwork, lack of time and disrespect! If there are Treaty Rights that need to be honored then now is the time. If we need further postponing of the CEC hearings to do so, so be it. Hydro cannot turn its back on this responsibility; taxpayers and hydro users and suppliers will not stand for any other way. Society has come to the table to hear, mitigate and take responsibility for all Truths to our energy needs and visions.
14. Manitobans agree with the CEC that a full regional assessment of impacts from all existing hydro projects in Manitoba needs to happen. And I would like to add before any projects are licensed. We need to have a clean slate and fix what we can, if we do not we are leaving the door wide open for bad karma to step in and there is no reason for that to happen, when we know better!
15. It concerns me that the Aboriginal Youth are pleading for NO MORE dams that their peaceful ways of life is at stake once again! They are also correct in asking for more energy conservation strategies to be a top priority.
16. I can understand the Elders' wisdom and harsh realities when they do not want their families to ever endure the cold and dark hardships that they have gone through before water hydro energy came along. Most of us who live down south in this province have no idea what that means to be freezing cold and to lose loved ones to it. I also understand the heavy weight of responsibility that is being placed on these Elders and communities in accepting hydro operations on their sacred Treaty Lands. Crow medicine comes into play where we will all have to honor and respect our past, present and future well being of Mother Earth. Accepting that she is able to change and accept her current reality and move on prayerfully in peaceful harmony that is needed to curb disease and dis-ease that these drastic environmental changes can bring.
17. Mercury in the waters, fish, animals, birds and humans is a massive concern for us! To say it is minimal, local, and regional is simply wrong. What if all the food coming into your home and community was full of mercury, would you still think it was minimal or okay, most likely not! It is a whole different story when it is your babies, parents or grandparents that end up with Mercury poisoning. We have to have a proper food plan for these affected communities. Where else can they fish and hunt that is safe? Can we make sure the fish that is in their community is not full of mercury? I have a cousin from up north who has mercury poisoning from eating the fish and wildlife and it is totally debilitating. It can take a once healthy active person and turn them into sad state of affairs where they are unable to contribute to their families and communities. This mercury is expected to be in the water for 30 years, if someone told me my grocery stores meat and water had mercury in

it for the next 30 years I would not be able to live with that. Why would we expect them to be able to? What is our plan?

18. Extra hydro-provincial- and federal money has to be spent and delivered for the health, mental health and wellness needs for the affected artificially flooded communities. We have a disgusting track record in this regard, especially for our Northern communities. The negative fall out that happens when all you know and care for starts getting sacrificed and destroyed can no longer be ignored. Its negative adverse effects touch the people and eco-systems all away along the waters edges in Manitoba that flow north to these dams. Some help could look like: a 24 hour help line, addiction and abuse programs, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Cancer and Diabetes care, Disaster Management training, educating and training of health care workers and so on.
19. Archeological sites that are 5000 years old being artificially flooded carries a huge responsibility to all of us as hydro users and taxpayers! Not only are we loosing the physical land in the now, we are drowning the history, culture and heritage of Manitoba and Canada's past. What if it held the secrets to our much needed environmental and spiritual sustainability and harmony, we may never know, can we live with the consequences of that? Do we recognize the stress, anxiety and emotional hardships this puts on the people to have their ancestors flooded? It will be essential to use the services of the Spiritual people to be able to right our wrongs in flooding this sacred community, to help clear the energy, to help deal with the grief.
20. Have we invested in enough conservation and alternative energy production methods or do we have tunnel vision for just water made electricity? And I do not mean spending another dime on wind farming; it is not sustainable as it negatively affects the birth rates of all species that lives near it. Not to underscore how it is killing our birds and sacred bats of which humanity is so crucially dependent on.
21. Do we really need this project, when is enough, really enough? How many people and eco-systems are we willing to sacrifice? Can we call it clean energy when it is sacrificing so much? We are not using the Cree World Vision when we are putting values on one life versus another. We can fudge the ledgers anyway we want too in the big scheme of valuing money over life but in the end can we live with this guilt? Deliberately harming another's peaceful way of life and right to naturally raise their families on their Treaty lands or privately owned lands. Harming the natural rights of the fish, wildlife and eco-systems? What is the karma that goes with this kind of destructive phase? Have we tried all ways to make it better, to ease or stop the suffering, do we have mercy? Are we accountable? Is the CEC accountable? What are other Clean Environment Commissions findings



saying? Are there things we are missing? Have we heard from all affected parties?

22. With these dams and their operations we are asking-telling the people to self-sacrifice themselves, their communities, heritage and culture, to sacrifice their babies and grandparents peaceful ways of life and natural eco-systems for water hydro production! It reminds me of the Sun Dance energy, of Warrior sacrifices for the hopes of greater good for all! The big difference here is Society does not respect these people who are being artificially flooded and we do not treat them like the brave Warriors that they are! No, we treat them as victims, whiners and complainers which only breeds further negative consequences and ill effects. What is the plan to raise the image and self esteem of these people, to place them on the top rung of the ladder instead of the bottom rung? We need to honor all of those people who store hydro water on their treaty lands and private lands. Treat them as Environmental Heroes as opposed to artificially flooded victims. We can help them prepare for floodwaters such as 24h hotline counseling, environmental grief counseling, disaster management training and so on. Let them tell their stories in your commercials and web pages, so we down south learn to understand what is really going on, whom the heroes are and the sacrifices they are making so that we have the electricity to run our homes and workplaces.
23. A huge acknowledgement with this grand flush of water to operate these northern dams came in the Red River Floodway hearings when the CEC asked the Manitoba Floodway Authority and Government what they were going to do to restore the harmony to the Red River valley and community? Owning up to the governments deliberate artificial flooding and treating us as the Environmental Warriors-Soldiers that they have turned us into has certainly helped heal some of the bad spiritual energy and karma. Providing us with the exact same rights and services that the rest of the province has even in flood times has gone along way to alleviate some of the stresses too. A necessary shift in attitude towards the good people of whom often have no choice to be sacrificed can do more good than you could ever imagine. That hearing ended with some firm check points, to do lists, accountability trails, and most importantly presenter and public consultations for follow up every 3, 5, 10 years and so on. This is extremely necessary to maintain accountability and peace of mind for those who do live in artificial floodwaters. To have no voice and to be lied too kills the very spirit of the people and that has long lasting negative affects that does not need to happen with proper leadership, truth telling, accountability and follow up. We have been there done that far too often already and it does end up in abuse to our families, addictions, suicides, disease and dis-ease, all because we did not respect, honor and properly help mitigate the adverse effects of artificial flooding to our fellow citizens.

24. I strongly encourage the Manitoba and Canadian Governments and Manitoba Hydro to stop placing the blame on Mother Nature for most of flooding that is going on in the millennium. We have collectively changed the drainage on our landscapes to further the economy and put the water in the lake silos to ensure a bumper water crop to run our turbines in the dam structures for the production of hydro electricity. It is as simple as that! And so is the provincial and national public acknowledgement of that Truth! Sometime the left hand did not know what the right was doing, I will give you that, but in the end, the water is being drained off the landscape as fast as it can and we are seeing some of horrific adverse effects like our waterways turning into blue green toxic algae death pits because of it.
25. When I look into our environmental sustainable future I am a tad worried! I do not like the water quality and quantity path that we are on. Our rapid draining of surface waters to the tributaries along with our artificial damming of the water is destroying and turning our sacred waters into toxics pools of waste, full of mercury, antibiotics, pesticides, chemicals and so on. We have to slow down this fast draining flush to the lakes and return it to its natural pace where the toxins and pollution can be filtered out. We need a commitment from Hydro and all levels of government that they shall restore and protect the natural flows to the lakes and to the dams. Restoring balance and harmony to Mother Nature also has to be apart of Hydro's mandate, mission and vision statements and action plans. In this very action, there will be education and job opportunities as well as the necessary water sustainability.
26. Without good clean healthy water we die! And sadly we are witnessing the deaths of so many dear people in the Philippines right now as water energy has turned against them. We cannot take the gift of safe drinkable water for granted. Nor can we take for granted that many of our Northern communities still do not have a safe supply of drinking water or a flushable toilet! Yet, there is a massive hydro dam or hydro infrastructure in their backyards! Time for change; time to get these communities up to speed with the rest of Manitoba and Canada. Time to right our societal wrongs, forgive and move on. Time to restore the harmony, create balance and respect those who have made great sacrifices in all past and present hydro production dealings!
27. I have a dream, a clear vision that we the people of Manitoba and Canada shall work harmoniously and profitably together on our future energy needs. That we shall adapt and innovate together recognizing that our Aboriginal People, including the Métis People are the first stewards of the land, air and water. That we shall continue to include them in the ownership and environmental sustainability planning and operations of our energy needs. Peace, harmony and balance becomes critical and essential in making these Crown Corporations and or Private Enterprises successful, profitable and

long lasting. I believe that if we come to the table respectfully and equitably for all our citizens and eco-systems, that we in Manitoba and Canada can collectively come up with an Energy plan that is fair for all and second to none! Our energy plan shall be used as the blueprint of community, culture, heritage and environmental sustainability success.

28. We once again find ourselves on the exciting tipping point of change for our bright future! It is only going to get better from here on in as we set to rest our old outdated ways. And embrace the present and future with equality, compassion and a sustainable green vision! All for One and One for All! It takes dedicated passionate intelligent people like all of you here today, all of our Commissioners and their supporting teams, panelists, presenters and the general public showing up, caring and contributing their truths, knowledge and best management practices to make this sustainable energy plan a successful reality.

I thank you for your time and attention and wish everyone the very best of good health, peace and prosperity. Merci Beaucoup, Meegwich

Respectfully yours,  
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