

Presentation from Janet McIvor and her family  
on November 14, 2013 at the  
Keeyask Generation Project Hearing

Good evening. We are the family whose ancestral land is on the GULL LAKE "Trapline 15" (GLT 15) area. Our family members have held the GLT15 licence, but hence we are not here to talk about the word "trapline", we are here to talk about "Traditional Land Use".

The CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION (CEC) has already been told that the GLT15 area will be the most devastated lands and waters by KEEYASK GENERATING STATION (KGS). You have already been told time and time again that in our Cree culture, aboriginal and treaty harvesting practices and rights are exercised by OUR FAMILY on the land WE KNOW, LOVE, and is OUR HOME.

We sit before you CEC to HEAR OUR VOICE for our RIGHTS as DESCENDANTS FROM THE KEEPERS of the LAND.

Our ancestral lands have already been disrupted by the work done to build the proposed KGS dam from what we have seen, when KGS is built, our lives, our heritage and our ancestral lands will be altered and destroyed forever.

All the MONEY in the world is not going to replace the loss of the ways of our ancestral connection to the GLT15 that will forever change. Our relationship with the land runs deep. Our way of life on GLT15 as we have come to live it will be wiped out when KGS is completed.

We want to talk to the CEC about two things:

1. The way KGS project HAS, HAVE and HAD affected our family, physically, mentally, socially and spiritually

2. The kind of accommodations that MB Hydro should provide to try and ease the damage and the mental stress and the personal turmoil done to each and every one of us.

We implore CEC to make a condition on the licence for KGS that our family be provided this accommodation.

### **A. How Keeyask Have, Has and Will Affect Us**

We are a traditional Cree family carrying on our Cree culture as our inherent right to do so, through all the commotion from the so-called progress. We are from the LAND and LIVE WITH the land, and to CARE for it.

We have had to deal with a lot of changes forced on us over the years. But by far the worst change imposed on us has been the building of the KEEYASK GENERATING STATION.

Yes, we know there are agreements between our First Nation and Manitoba Hydro. We feel the First Nation got boxed in by all the pressure. There was the pressure from all the damage that the existing hydro projects have done to us. And the pressure that came from KGS itself: many of us believe that KGS will get built regardless of what we want, that Manitoba Hydro has so much power, they will get what they want. So there was a real pressure to agree to get something from this next project, instead of nothing.

But we think that the damage from KGS will be so great, and that what TCN is getting in return is so little, that TCN should never have agreed to KGS. We think it goes against our Cree worldview to allow such permanent and widespread damage and harm, especially when so little is being offered in return.

This is what the damage will be to our family and our homelands alone:

- Displacing our way of life; Flooding us out

- Disconnecting the integrity of our connection to our past; Ruining our relationship to our homeland
- Destroying the way of the hunting and fishing; Affecting the way we harvest the land and waters (to sustain life on land)
- Producing mercury and affecting the fish; Taking away our fishing
- Taking away our plants, waters and shore line that severely affects the habits of different species that makes it a beautiful sanctuary

KGS will destroy and seriously damage all of that.

We have been forced to negotiate for some sort of accommodation, under Article 10 of the Adverse Effects Agreement. That says: “Hydro will remain liable to compensate any member, who is a licenced trapper not the Traditional Land User, for any loss of revenue from commercial trapping and any direct loss or damage to any buildings, structures and other infrastructure located on a registered trapline used by the member, which results from the construction and operation of the KGS project.”

Manitoba Hydro has suggested to us that all they have to do is pay us a very small amount of money and perhaps find us another trapline area, but this is not a trapline issue. We have been given very few choices and all very poor.

First of all, if we find another suitable trapline area, it will never substitute for our homeland, where we have always been. It will be like a forced relocation. Anyone who understands Cree culture would NEVER say to a Cree person “just pack up and move on”. That would degrade who we are, because we are About the relationship to OUR land – the land the Creator gave to us to live on and take care of.

Second, we are about to lose everything, including use of our lands, trees, rocks, shorelines. These are “structures and infrastructures” to us. Yet Hydro refuses to accept this and says we only get barebones compensation for our homes on the land.

We ask the CEC to consider recommending conditions be put on the licence for proposed Keeyask generating station.

## **Conditions on the Licence**

**Hydro to make best efforts, in good faith and on an urgent basis, to negotiate a compensation package for our family that includes:**

- 1) Infrastructure: provide Compensation and mitigate for loss of use to traditional homelands to the family of, or damage to, Leon’s Island, Main Camp, Lillian’s Island, and other land structures in the GLT15 area that are important spiritually or culturally to the family.**
- 2) Ceremonies and Menorial: Hydro to fund the costs of the family building a teepee for ceremonial purposes within the GLT15 area that will not be disrupted by operation of KGS, and a memorial on Leon’s Island to commemorate what we are losing.**
- 3) Heritage Sites” PETROGLYPHS in GLT15 area to be left undisturbed and protected.**