

REPORT TO THE CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION REGARDING KEYASK GENERATION PROJECT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ON PIMICIKAMAK CREE NATION RESOURCE AREA

October 9, 2013

SUBMITTED BY PCN CITIZEN

First of all, I want to thank the PCN working team for inviting to speak on the environmental impact of Keeyask Generating Station.

I obtained my social work degree years ago and I was also employed by the Cross Lake Band of Indians for about 10 years assisting the Chief and Council from 1990 to 1999 before I pursued my degree in social work. I want to express that I had the privilege to work, observe and learn from our late great leaders who were initially involved with the Northern Flood Agreement: late Walter Monias, Ernest Scott, and my late dad Etienne Robinson and many of our late elders who directed us and shared their wisdom in regards to our treaty rights and respect of our resources, especially our water which is the most precious resource we have to survive.

According to my findings, Keeyask is the fourth largest generating station in Manitoba. I believe this causes a significant impact to our water ways because we are on the main stream of the Nelson River. Why did Hydro fail to include PCN members in the consultation and negotiations process? This is similar with the Northern Flood Agreement, as previously with the five (5) bands.

AND why are we discussing the Keeyask Dam when our own NORTHERN FLOOD AGREEMENT (NFA) has not been tabled at our level and community that impacts our community, our people and our future!!! It seems like we are forgotten!!! We know for a fact, as stated on the MINUTES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA: THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CROWN CORPORATION (Tuesday, April 9, 2013) reporting of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board of the fiscal years ending March 2009 to March 31, 2012. I'm going to make reference to some of the discussions in the minutes:

"the bulk of our hydro generation is on the Nelson River system, about 80 % of what we produce is in the north".

"We've been working really quite effectively with Cross Lake, which is the one community that didn't enter into an implementation agreement with us". I totally believe that is incorrect in terms of when Hydro reports that they are working with us quite effectively when I see my people continue to suffer the consequences and being sacrificed!! I'm a social worker and advocate in my community; I do the frontline work for health on a daily basis. It's very difficult and heartbreaking to see my people going through poverty and depression on a daily basis especially with our population and growing population of 200 newborns per year. We have a 89% unemployment rate in our community....where is the promise through the NFA in regards to mass employment. We have many youth and graduates in our community that come back to their community however there is no work. We have a growing population, we have about 200 newborns every year. It saddens me that Hydro is benefitting from all the accumulated revenue – billions of dollars in export sales to

the US, Ontario and Saskatchewan WHEN OUR OWN PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT!!! It clearly states on the Minutes, as stated, "Over the last decade, in fact, if we look at the breakdown of our revenues, commercial industrial electricity revenues were \$6.2 billion, export revenues were \$5.2 billion and residential customer revenues were \$4.3. Further states, "We've got committed sales agreements with Northern States Power, Minnesota Power, Wisconsin Public Service, and the firm commitments that we've booked are valued at about \$7 billion over the terms. About \$5 billion of that is subject to the construction of Keeyask". AGAIN where was the consultation with us when it clearly states that Hydro made billions of revenue through our most valuable precious resource ---OUR WATER AND LAND!

IN TERMS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

According to the report dated June 2012 Keeyask Generation Project Environmental Impact Statement states, "Manitoba's Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship is expected to direct the Clean Environment Commission to conduct public hearings to provide the Minister with recommendations on the Project" (p.9). Further states, "The Project is subject to an environmental assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act and The Environmental Act (Manitoba) and must meet combined federal and provincial regulatory requirements before it can be built. Provincial and federal regulators are working together in the environmental review" (p. 9). According to this report, there were undertaking consultations with certain Aboriginal groups via bilateral discussions which included Pimicikamak Cree Nation which as rights under the Northern Flood Agreement. In the first two rounds issues identified generally into seven categories: project planning, training, employment, business, physical environment, social-economic and heritage resources, resource use, and the consultation process.

In 1990, I started working for the Cross Lake Band of Indians for about 10 years until I decided to pursue my career in the Social Work field. I had the great opportunity to work with our great late leaders, Walter Monias, my late dad Etienne Robinson, late Ernest Scott and many of our elders that passed on. These great leaders worked hand in hand and suffered to ensure that we maintained what was rightfully ours. It was a good working relationship and that's how we should all be in our community...WE HAVE TO HAVE ONE VISION AND BE UNITED!!!

I'm in my mid 40's now, as a child I remember we used to haul pails of water from just down the bank; I remember how clear it used to be! I remember our elder, Ralph Colombe would use his horse to haul the water for us too; he usually charged us 25 cents to fill up the barrel. I also remember that ever since the project, at one time the water level was so low, we played soccer down the bank where our swimming area used to be; the water was so low! Due to these continuous fluctuations of our water levels--we greatly feel these impacts! It's not safe at all to drink from our water anymore; we have to rely on the Water Treatment Facilities that is full of Chlorine! We know for a fact that chlorine is dangerous for our health! No wonder we have many of our people are encountering chronic health issues such as growing number of cancer, dialysis, and heart disease. We have lost abundance of our diet such as the beaver which does not taste the same and our muskrats. The water levels at our traditional hunting grounds are so unpredictable most of the time, at one point it's very low and high. I'm not even a traditional hunter however it's obvious when I go out at our cabin. I clearly see the fluctuations! It's sad that I can't even drink from the water at our cabin area because I

fear the water will make me ill. Further states, "The Northern Flood Committee was consistently denied adequate funding and was divided, in 1990, when one community, Split Lake, withdrew to reach its own separate "global settlement" (p. 246).

According to a study in the website by Martin Loney on *Social Problems, Community Trauma and Hydro Project Impacts* states:

"Thirty-one studies examined hydroelectric megaprojects. Most focus on the impacts on native people and conclude that hydroelectric megaprojects generate dramatic ecological changes that have significant negative impacts on the native people's economy and society. The impacts include the decimation of fisheries, flooding of hunting territories, decline in natural resources requiring increased harvesting efforts and higher out-of-pocket expenses, more individual and community stress, health impacts and other social and cultural effects" (p.236). In response, there has been numerous studies pertaining to the TRAUMA and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT resulting from these Hydro project....why do we keep going back when it is all written and verbally expressed to the heart!! WHY IS IT CONTINUED DEAF EARS!!! We already recognize that we cannot go back because the environmental damage has been done to our resource area HOWEVER we need a fair share of what the government is benefitting!!!

I will continue to do research regarding the impacts! We have to work together in good spirit and intent.....we were promised that!!!

Respectfully,

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PCN Citizen