

MANITOBA CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

REGIONAL CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY MEETING

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Transcript of Proceedings
Held at York Landing, Manitoba
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017

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CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

Serge Scrafield - Chairman
Glennis Lewis - Commissioner
Neil Harden - Commissioner
Tim Sopuck - Commissioner
Cathy Johnson - Commission Secretary

Doug Smith - Report writer

YORK LANDING SPEAKERS:

Wayne Redhead
Councillor Leroy Constant
Jimmy Beardy
Jeff Beardy
Joe Sinclair
Obaidiah Wastesicoot
Donna Saunders
Doreen Saunders
Stella Chapman
Isaac Beardy
Councillor George Beardy
Flora Beardy
Johnny Saunders
Silas Riley
Nellie Redhead
Elizabeth Beardy
Jim Thomas
Stanley Spence

1 WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017

2 UPON COMMENCING AT 1:30 P.M.

3 WAYNE REDHEAD: Good afternoon and
4 welcome everybody. So we will start the meeting
5 off with an opening prayer from one of our elders,
6 Elder Obaidiah Wastesicoot is going to do the
7 opening prayer.

8 (Opening prayer).

9 WAYNE REDHEAD: We will go through the
10 agenda for today's meeting. If you have copies we
11 will go through it.

12 We need to welcome everybody to this
13 meeting today with the Clean Environment
14 Commission. We have Chair Serge Scrafield, and
15 other commissioners from the CEC and their
16 helpers, their assistants.

17 So, the opening prayer was done by
18 Elder Obaidiah Wastesicoot. We will have an
19 introduction of the CEC panel members shortly.
20 Opening comments, I will do that, along with the
21 background information and the RCEA review and the
22 purpose of the meeting today.

23 We will also have the opening and
24 welcoming remarks from Councillor Leroy Constant.
25 And we will have opening comments by the Chair, I

1 hope that he will have opening comments, the CEC
2 panel. Then we will open up the floor to
3 community members. And if you're interested, I'll
4 just let you know you have the floor.

5 We will have -- after that is over
6 then we will have the closing comments from the
7 CEC panel first, and then we will have the closing
8 comments from our Councillor Leroy Constant, and
9 then I will close off the meeting with the closing
10 comments, and then we will have a closing prayer
11 from Elder Flora Beardy. And after that we will
12 have supper here.

13 And we're hoping that we will have a
14 great meeting this afternoon. We encourage each
15 and every one to say what it is they want to say
16 and welcome everybody to -- and encourage each one
17 of you to speak up and say what it is that you
18 want to say, to talk about our perspective, our
19 experiences and our thoughts. So welcome
20 everybody.

21 So I will give a little background on
22 where we have come to today, what's been happening
23 in the last few years. The RCEA arose from a
24 recommendation from the Clean Environment
25 Commission report on the Bipole III hearings. At

1 that time it said that Manitoba Hydro, in
2 cooperation with the Manitoba Government, that
3 they conduct a Regional Cumulative Effects
4 Assessment for all Hydro projects and associated
5 infrastructure in the Nelson River sub watershed,
6 and that this be undertaken prior to the licensing
7 of any additional projects in the Nelson River
8 sub watershed after the Bipole III project.

9 The RCEA was then planned and
10 conducted by Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro. The
11 reports, and there are thousands of pages of text,
12 that came about in two phases. Phase I described
13 the temporal, which was relating the time and
14 spatial scope, relating to space of the RCEA and
15 the proposed methodology. Phase II aims to use
16 the best assessment methods available to quantify,
17 where possible, or qualitatively describe the
18 cumulative effects of hydroelectric development on
19 the people, the water and the land in the RCEA
20 ROI; describe to the extent possible the overall
21 health of the eco-system. And that was the RCEA
22 phase II preamble.

23 After the phase I and II reports were
24 published, the Manitoba Clean Environment
25 Commission received a mandate from the Minister to

1 carry out a review and public engagement process
2 of the RCEA. The CEC is asking communities to
3 comment on whether those documents, the RCEA
4 documents accurately reflect the cumulative
5 effects that they have experienced, that we have
6 experienced, providing comments on the community
7 profiles that were developed by Manitoba Hydro as
8 part of the RCEA, and we will have further to say
9 on that, and provide suggestions for future
10 actions, monitoring, remediation, et cetera, what
11 remediation or what steps should be taken to
12 manage these from happening into the future.

13 York Factory is participating in the
14 public engagement process and that's why we are
15 here today and that's why they're here today.

16 The written submission from York
17 Factory First Nation: The community steering
18 committee met several times to discuss the RCEA
19 and submit written comments about York Factory's
20 perspective on the legacy of hydroelectric
21 development in the RCEA work done by Hydro and
22 Manitoba.

23 The comments have been submitted to
24 the CEC and copies are available today. Those are
25 the ones that were handed out. They had been

1 posted on CEC website and will be part of the
2 public record.

3 We thank the community members,
4 initially it was a community meeting. We had
5 hoped to draw more people from the additional
6 meetings that we had. We had pretty well the same
7 members that came out to our meetings to put our
8 commentary report together.

9 At this community meeting there is a
10 second part of York Factory's engagement in the
11 CEC process. The meeting is meant to give members
12 a chance to talk directly with the CEC panel
13 members who are up here. Our goal is to let
14 members share personal perspectives and stories
15 and to speak, if you wish to, in our own language,
16 about what is your perspective and stories. And
17 it is encouraged to -- we do encourage that you
18 speak in your language (Native language spoken).

19 While the rest of the RCEA process is
20 following the western process, we want this
21 meeting to respect our culture of oral sharing,
22 storytelling and speaking from the heart.

23 The meeting is being transcribed up
24 here and everything that is shared will become
25 part of the public record, along with the written

1 comments that have already been submitted. We
2 welcome everyone who has come today to share your
3 own stories, your own experiences and ideas about
4 what future actions are needed. If you prefer to
5 speak in our language, please do. We have people
6 on hand who will interpret for you. Egosi.

7 So the next part of the agenda is we
8 will have Councillor Constant come to say comments
9 from the Chief and Council.

10 COUNCILLOR CONSTANT: All right. I
11 would like to first welcome the panel to the
12 community. Thank you guys for coming. It's a
13 whole different panel from what I remember in
14 2013. Actually Mr. Neil Harden is the only one
15 that was there back in '13. I sat on the CEC in
16 the hearings as a youth rep, and that's what kind
17 of inspired me to take part in the council
18 position I'm now in.

19 So, Chief Bland sends his regrets. He
20 had to attend a meeting out of the community and
21 he asked me to do some opening remarks on behalf
22 of the Chief and Council.

23 And one thing that we are really
24 trying to press here is community input. It
25 really helps with the process in getting where we

1 need to be. One thing to note, while this is
2 going to be on the record, is that there is no
3 environmental monitoring being done on the system
4 right now. They say there is, but we know Hydro's
5 way of, you know, saying everything is green and
6 everything is good, and we know it's not. We see
7 the effects here, we see the effects daily and it
8 is really concerning, especially coming from our
9 elders. These are -- basically our water now is a
10 reservoir and it's not what it used to be. And
11 the elders taste it in the wild meat, they taste
12 it in the fish, everything.

13 So getting back to the environmental
14 monitoring, there is hardly anything being done.
15 So the recommendation is that we do a whole review
16 of the CRD, the AFP, the environmental damage it
17 has caused with this unprecedented event that they
18 reference a lot. This is the third occurrence we
19 have had in the last ten years, and things need to
20 change.

21 So you think of the hundreds of miles
22 on our river system, between the Lake Winnipeg
23 Regulation that I reference there, the CRD and the
24 AFP, that it is really concerning to know that the
25 Manitoba Government, you know, has not grasped the

1 need for an environmental assessment of the entire
2 system as a whole. So, I think that we need to do
3 a whole survey of the whole system again and see
4 what's going on, really going on. And like I
5 said, our community feels the effects of -- and
6 you're going to hear it today and I wouldn't be --
7 it's going to be emotional, it's a really
8 sensitive topic to talk about for our people, with
9 the Hydro effects, it's not a good one. But I'm
10 glad you guys are here to listen. I will keep
11 this short. But thank you to the community
12 members, thank you, Obaidiah, for the opening
13 prayer, and I hope we have a progressive meeting
14 today. Thank you.

15 WAYNE REDHEAD: Thank you Leroy
16 Constant, Councillor Leroy Constant.

17 So I forgot to do an introduction of
18 the CEC panel, so I will let them introduce
19 themselves and then they can go to their opening
20 comments from the CEC panel. Thank you.

21 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, thank you so much
22 for all of your opening remarks, and especially
23 for inviting us to your community. I was
24 fortunate once before to be in your community and
25 was very happy, and we all are very happy to be

1 invited here today.

2 My name, as already mentioned, is
3 Serge Scrafield, and I'm the Chair of the Clean
4 Environment Commission, a different Chair than
5 Leroy saw last time. And I will let the other
6 panelists introduce themselves starting with Neil
7 here, and then I'll make a few remarks.

8 MR. HARDEN: Thank you. My name is
9 Neil Harden. I was here back in 2014 with the
10 Lake Winnipeg panel, and I am happy to be back and
11 to hear again from your community.

12 MS. LEWIS: My name is Glennis Lewis,
13 and I'm from Brandon, Manitoba. So a long ways
14 away. And I would like to also thank you for
15 inviting us into your community today.

16 MR. SOPUCK: My name is Tim Sopuck.
17 I'm new on the Clean Environment Commission panel.
18 And like the others, I'm very pleased to be here.
19 Thank you very much for the invitation.

20 THE CHAIRMAN: Just a few things from
21 us. As Wayne already indicated, and Leroy made
22 some remarks as well, we are here today because
23 the Minister -- well, first of all, of course,
24 because you invited us, and the Minister of
25 Sustainable Development asked us to speak to all

1 First Nations and communities identified in the
2 area, and invite them to provide written comment
3 regarding the Regional Cumulative Effects
4 Assessment done by Hydro. And your community, of
5 course, has provided those comments and they are
6 very helpful to us. So thank you for doing that.

7 The Minister also advised us that if a
8 community expressed a strong desire to meet with
9 us, that we should do that. And of course, you
10 also did that, so we were more than happy to
11 accept your invitation to come here.

12 The Minister also asked that we
13 conduct any meetings in a manner that encourages
14 participation and inclusiveness. So hopefully
15 this setting here today will do that, but
16 certainly we're willing to do anything
17 differently, if you would like us to.

18 Once we have heard from your community
19 and all communities, we have heard from a number
20 but we are still waiting for a few, once we've
21 heard from everyone, we will review those
22 submissions and think about them, and then make
23 recommendations to the Minister summarizing what
24 we received from the communities during the course
25 of this whole outreach program.

1 And the only thing I wanted to add is
2 that we do transcribe, I believe Wayne mentioned
3 that we transcribe, and Cece, who is our
4 transcriber over here on my right, will record
5 everything that's said. And how she is able to do
6 that is a mystery to us, but she manages to do it.
7 So if you could use a mic when you speak, that
8 would be very helpful, because we review those
9 afterwards. We can't necessarily remember
10 everything that we heard here. So it's a big help
11 to be able to reread it afterwards. So if you
12 could use the mic, that would be helpful for us.
13 So with that I will turn it back to Wayne. Thank
14 you.

15 WAYNE REDHEAD: Thank you so much. So
16 we will get on with opening the floor to community
17 members. If you want to share your experiences,
18 your thoughts, your perspectives on the RCEA,
19 please line up right here, and just raise your
20 hands and we'll get to you.

21 Okay. We'll start off with Jimmy
22 Beardy.

23 JIMMY BEARDY: Wayne asked me to take
24 the whole afternoon, so I hope we don't fall
25 asleep. (Native language spoken.)

1 Hello. My name is Jimmy Beardy and I
2 am a member of the York Factory First Nation, and
3 I work as a monitoring assistant for the
4 implementation program. My official title at the
5 organization is stewardship engagement
6 facilitator. I have been involved and seen Hydro
7 development occur for the past 42 years in our
8 region. I worked for the Northern Flood Committee
9 from 1975 to 1977 as a liaison officer for Split
10 Lake and York Landing. Most of the Northern Flood
11 Committee workers were laid off after the Northern
12 Flood Agreement was signed in 1977, and I was one
13 of them. I believe the people who could have
14 implemented the Northern Flood Agreement were laid
15 off, and that's one of the reasons that the
16 Northern Flood Agreement failed, plus the divide
17 and conquer tactics that Manitoba Hydro and the
18 Provincial Government imposed upon us.

19 Today I would like to welcome these
20 people who are taking the time to come to our
21 community to listen to our experiences with hydro
22 development. I hope that what we have to say
23 doesn't fall on deaf ears and nothing is done
24 about what we have to say.

25 One of my quotes in the submission of

1 the York Factory First Nation states: I want to
2 ask the Clean Environment Commission if we are
3 going through the motions here. When we speak, we
4 speak from our hearts. We share something that
5 was taught to us and passed on to us, and we
6 believe it. It comes from our heart, not from our
7 brain. It's not the western way of writing it all
8 down and saying, let me tell you how it is. In
9 all of the years we've been here, we felt all the
10 pain of what has been done to us, and it is hard
11 to express that.

12 Also, I've gone to so many meetings
13 since I started this job and I've asked the same
14 question: Are we just going through the motion so
15 Manitoba Hydro can fulfill their licence
16 requirements? I don't think that you people
17 realize how painful it is to see our animals,
18 lands and waters being destroyed for the comfort
19 of people down south, and in the name of progress.
20 We worked hard at a very young age to look after
21 Mother Earth since the Creator made us stewards of
22 the land. That's one thing that's missing in the
23 Regional Cumulative Effects Assessment for
24 hydroelectric development on the Churchill,
25 Burntwood and Nelson River systems, prepared by

1 Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba in response to the
2 Manitoba Clean Environment Commission public
3 outreach process to hear from affected communities
4 about their impressions of the RCEA reports.

5 There is a total lack of input of our traditional
6 knowledge in this process. It's all about western
7 science views, and to me it's an incomplete
8 picture of what has really happened to our people,
9 lands, waters and wildlife from our perspective.

10 There are many observations we made.
11 Mercury contamination will always be in our waters
12 because Manitoba Hydro continues to fluctuate the
13 water and the currents are getting stronger. This
14 causes erosion and trees fall into the water.
15 Manitoba Hydro is not doing enough to clear up the
16 debris on the lake and around the 300 islands that
17 are in the Split Lake and York Landing areas.

18 I believe we, and the future
19 generations, will never again enjoy or see clear
20 clean water like we did before hydro development.
21 I think the last time I drank water directly from
22 the lake was in the late 1970s.

23 In regards to our people, boils have
24 been detected in some of them. Is this due to the
25 quality of the water? Rashes are breaking out on

1 peoples' hands. Is this due to the quality of the
2 water? Bladder infections are being detected in
3 some of our people, even in a nine year old. Is
4 this due to the quality of water? Newborn babies
5 get sores and rashes when they're in York Landing,
6 yet these sores and rashes go away when the babies
7 are out of York Landing. Is it due to the quality
8 of the water?

9 There was a question -- an
10 observation, one of our committee members noticed
11 that the algae was turning blue. So we asked that
12 question, the algae used to be green but it is now
13 blue, why could this be? Is there any issue with
14 blue algae? Well, we had a response from a
15 Manitoba Hydro employee on that. So blue-green
16 algae has become more common in Lake Winnipeg due
17 to increases in the amount of nutrients flowing
18 into the lake. The nutrients primarily enter the
19 lake from non-point sources such as a nutrient
20 run-off from agricultural sources, and municipal
21 run-off which accounts for more than 70 per cent
22 of the phosphorous load to the lake. As the water
23 in the Nelson River, this is including Split Lake,
24 comes primarily from Lake Winnipeg, higher
25 nutrient levels are carried downstream, which may

1 result in increases in algae growth in Split Lake
2 and other water bodies along the Nelson River.

3 Blue-green algae can make the water
4 look blueish green, green, turquoise or brown in
5 colour. Blue-green algae can release toxins
6 harmful to humans and animals if ingested. Water
7 quality monitoring, including algae, occurs
8 annually on Split Lake under Manitoba Hydro and
9 the Manitoba Government Coordinated Aquatic
10 Monitoring Program.

11 Like I said, the current has gotten
12 stronger where the ferry travels. It takes about
13 five to ten minutes longer to get back from Split
14 Lake because it's going against the current. This
15 is coming by barge.

16 And another thing I have witnessed, I
17 believe in the near future there will be no ice
18 crossing for our winter road at Split Lake due to
19 the velocity of the current and continued
20 fluctuation of the waters. Some of the workers
21 have noticed there was air bubbles when the ice
22 was forming in the channel. I believe it is
23 caused by the silt that's in the water. It
24 ferments when it is warm and comes up to the
25 surface on the ice during winter.

1 There is a reason why we should build
2 a winter road from Ilford to the Butneau Road. It
3 would be a lot safer than crossing at Split Lake.
4 I believe this won't take long to build and would
5 probably cost the same as maintaining the present
6 winter road. Manitoba Hydro can help us
7 financially to do this since they are creating the
8 problems. We have to look at the safety of our
9 people first.

10 We've also noticed there are deformed
11 fish in our waters and there is some
12 discolouration in some pickerel. Other kinds of
13 fish are entering our waters that were never here
14 before, like smelt and catfish. Why is that?
15 Silt is forming in the lake because of erosion and
16 fluctuation of the water. This causes plant food
17 for the fish to be covered up and the fish either
18 will die off or they will leave the area.

19 I've been told by fishermen in our
20 area that there is hardly any more white fish in
21 our lakes. There used to be lots of them there.
22 The fishermen believe that the white fish have
23 left the lake because of high waters and
24 fluctuation in water which have caused erosion and
25 silt to form in the water. Apparently there is

1 more white fish being caught in the rivers than in
2 the lake.

3 Another matter I would like to bring
4 up is agreements are signed with us, but sometimes
5 these agreements are broken and not followed. I
6 sometimes wonder what happened to the honour of
7 the Crown. For example, when they signed the
8 Northern Flood Agreement in 1977, one of the
9 articles said that the signing of the agreement
10 won't affect normal program funding, but the
11 Federal Government went ahead and broke this
12 promise. I'd like to take a quote from the Let
13 Justice Flow report on the Interchurch Inquiry
14 into northern hydro development.

15 "A striking sign of the Federal
16 Government's failure to treat the
17 Northern Flood Agreement seriously was
18 the evidence that the Department of
19 Indian Affairs withheld normal program
20 funding from Northern Flood Agreement
21 First Nations in the years following
22 the signing of the Northern Flood
23 Agreement. A 1985 report issued over
24 the signature of the Deputy Prime
25 Minister of Canada Eric Nielson

1 states: The Northern Flood Agreement
2 assured continued, undiminished levels
3 of essential services to the Indian
4 communities, but this commitment was
5 not kept. Internal Department of
6 Indian and Northern Affairs reports
7 indicate that from 1977 to 1985,
8 Northern Flood Agreement bands
9 received \$10,700 per capita in
10 benefits, while other Manitoba bands
11 received \$26,100 per capita. This
12 pattern is commonplace in areas where
13 bands negotiate supposedly enriched
14 opportunity packages. The results
15 turn out to be the reverse of what was
16 intended.

17 This action took place in direct
18 contravention of Northern Flood
19 Agreement Article 2.4, which says that
20 normal program funding shall in no way
21 be diminished by any entitlements
22 pursuant to this agreement."

23 That's in the Let Justice Flow report of the
24 Interchurch Inquiry into hydroelectric development
25 in 2001.

1 Well, we've known about this, and I
2 have told my past and present leaders of our First
3 Nation for the past 15 years about this. No
4 action has ever been taken on the Federal
5 Government by us or the other four Nations that
6 were affected by this broken promise. These
7 shortfalls that my First Nation incurred from 1977
8 to 1983 could help us -- could have incurred --
9 helped put us financially unstable. This loss, if
10 recovered, could help make our First Nation more
11 financially stable.

12 Another matter that I would like to
13 talk about is what has happened to our people
14 because of the monetary compensation that they
15 received in the past. When I first came to York
16 Landing, I think it was back in late '60s, I was
17 so proud of our people here. They helped each
18 other. They didn't ask for nothing in return when
19 they helped each other and always had cheques and
20 money in their pockets. And they had their own
21 ways of, their own customs. Like for example,
22 when a child had their birthday, the family made
23 cakes, cookies, whatever, and that little child
24 ran around the community delivering them to each
25 household. And that little child got money in

1 return to buy their own present. I don't see that
2 no more. That's one of the things that has gone
3 from our community.

4 Another thing that I used to see was
5 when people came to visit us, the council went
6 around and asked for food for our visitors while
7 they're visiting here. And before they went home,
8 council went around again and we donated money to
9 help them in their travels to go home. That's
10 gone now because everybody -- in a way I think
11 that hydro development has helped them to become
12 more dependent on the money that is given by
13 Manitoba Hydro.

14 Today, like the so-called
15 compensation, my people have become dependent on
16 Hydro money that comes to the community. It seems
17 like their pride and dignity was taken away after
18 hydro development came about. I want to quote
19 from the Let Justice Flow report in the
20 Interchurch Inquiry into Northern Hydro
21 development in regards to compensation. The NFA
22 article 24.8 states, under the Northern Flood
23 Agreement, it says:

24 "Because mitigatory and/or remedial
25 measures are more likely to have a

1 lasting beneficial effect on the
2 viability of a community and/or
3 individual residents than monetary
4 compensation, such measures shall be
5 preferred."

6 And the panel believes there is a risk
7 in using compensation as the basic conceptual
8 framework to redress project impacts. The scope
9 and nature of the Northern Flood Agreement are
10 broader than merely paying out financial
11 restitution (though financial compensation for
12 damaged property is one component of the Northern
13 Flood Agreement.) Every effort must be made by
14 Crown parties and Pimicikamak Cree Nation to
15 ensure that the Northern Flood Agreement itself
16 does not become another layer of dependency.
17 Implementation must be directed toward attaining
18 lasting self-sufficiency.

19 A Pimicikamak Cree Nation councillor
20 at that time, Nelson Miller, noted that
21 compensation was the last thing on their list.
22 Warren Allmand, who was an Indian Affairs Minister
23 at one time with the Liberal Government, I
24 believe, affirmed the original Northern Flood
25 Agreement intention that monetary compensation was

1 not the preferred vehicle to mitigate adverse
2 effects.

3 "Reflecting the communal perspective
4 that pervaded Aboriginal
5 presentations, the panel wishes to
6 emphasize the importance of the
7 Northern Flood Agreement
8 implementation contributing to social
9 cohesion and community well-being as
10 opposed to just material advancement
11 of individuals or households."

12 In the York Factory First Nation 1995
13 comprehensive implementation agreement, we wonder
14 why there is no provisions or money allocated for
15 environmental monitoring program, or any kind of
16 monitoring program. I believe that's why
17 agreements fail, because nobody seems to be
18 monitoring them so the agreement is followed and
19 adhered to.

20 In closing, I'm attaching a summary of
21 recommendations that were written in that report
22 of the Interchurch Inquiry. I hope you read them
23 and see what can be done about them. In my heart
24 I've never let go of the 1977 agreement. Because
25 how can you -- if Warren Allmand considered it a

1 treaty, who was a former Indian Affairs Minister,
2 how can you renegotiate a treaty? To me that 1977
3 agreement still exists. And we talked to Hydro in
4 the past, they think the '95 agreement is
5 outdated. Well, if it's outdated, let's go back
6 to the '77 agreement that should have stayed there
7 in the first place.

8 Also, before I close off I would like
9 to borrow a quote from my good friend Roddy
10 Ouskan, what he wrote also in the submission by
11 the York Factory First Nation. He says:

12 "What's this going to do? Even if we
13 make all kind of recommendations,
14 what's Hydro going to do about it?
15 What's the province going to do?
16 What's Canada going to do?"

17 Thank you for the time to listen to
18 me. Egosi.

19 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi, Jimmy Beardy.
20 Anybody else? Who is next?

21 JEFF BEARDY: Good afternoon. My name
22 is Jeff Beardy. I'm a member of the York Factory
23 First Nation. I grew up here in York Landing,
24 ever since I was a little boy I grew up here. And
25 I wanted to touch base or talk a little bit about

1 the effects, the water, the hydro has had on our
2 community. Especially I'm speaking for myself,
3 because this is my personal experience. Because
4 I've grown up, I grew up here in York Landing and
5 I just wanted to share some of my thoughts about
6 how it has affected myself in my memories of how
7 the land used to be.

8 I'm involved in the community quite a
9 bit with recreational activities. I volunteer a
10 lot in the community by organizing outings,
11 events, I'm a big part of that. Every time we try
12 to do -- like this past summer in particular, the
13 water was really high beginning in spring and
14 early summer. And it had a big effect in our
15 community with our hunters and with our young
16 people, our resource users. We weren't able to go
17 to certain places in the community that we used to
18 be able to go to.

19 And one area that -- like I grew up
20 going to the beach, we called it Bare Ass Beach.
21 I don't know how that name came to be but it has
22 been called Bare Ass Beach ever since I was a kid.
23 And this is a beach that was so beautiful. It's
24 located west side of our community, a big island,
25 and there was a beach there that we grew up going

1 to every summer. It was a beautiful place where
2 we always looked forward to going to. There was
3 always trips out there every weekend with
4 families. And there would always be families
5 there all of the time, swimming, picnicking,
6 camping, fishing.

7 And recently, you know, we went there,
8 probably this past summer we went there just to go
9 see if there is even a chance for us to even try
10 to, you know, revitalize the place so that we can
11 start taking kids there again. And it turned out
12 that it just wasn't -- because of all of the
13 debris that's in the water now in that area. We
14 went into the water, the shoreline, just to feel
15 around to see if it was going to be safe enough to
16 take kids there. There is still debris in that
17 water, there is trees, big trees on the bottom of
18 the shoreline in that area, a lot of rocks. And
19 the water was so high that, you know, that we
20 couldn't really land a boat there safely.

21 Then when you look at the rest of the
22 summer, from like this past August until now,
23 until late fall, the water was so low, really low,
24 and the rocks were sticking out of the shoreline.
25 You know, even when the water was low it was still

1 in poor condition to even go there.

2 So this was an area, you know, that we
3 gathered every summer, it's a place that's lost
4 now. There is no hope for that place, it doesn't
5 seem like there's hope for that place where we
6 grew up. We can't take our children there
7 anymore. It's really sad.

8 Another area, it's Sandy Beach, it's
9 also on the west side of our community, which is a
10 beautiful beach that doesn't exist anymore. They
11 have had to build a riprap project all along our
12 shoreline in that area, so that place is just all
13 high rock now. And all along that area was a nice
14 sandy beach, a nice sandy sand bar where we used
15 to always go during the summer. So it is really
16 sad that, you know, we can't go to these places
17 anymore. It's only a memory to us now. And we
18 share with our young people about these places and
19 they can't believe that that existed at one time.

20 And also, before we had the causeway
21 built, there was flooding right in front of our
22 community where we couldn't cross the lake for
23 many years. This was another gathering place for
24 us, across the lake where we would go as children,
25 we would venture out on our own as children and we

1 would go there to swim, to fish, to have cookouts.
2 So that place, we lost that connection for a while
3 until we were able to build a causeway to go
4 across the lake to practice those events that we
5 enjoyed doing.

6 And all along our shoreline in front
7 of our community we had certain sand bars and
8 beaches at one time, but those are all gone too,
9 and because of the riprap project we had to do,
10 you know, there is just rock, big rocks in front
11 of our community now.

12 Another thing that has been affected,
13 that I've noticed for many years, was our
14 shorelines don't have berry bushes anymore. Right
15 from the end of our community to the end towards,
16 from the west to east side along the shoreline
17 there was berries, a lot of berries, gooseberries,
18 raspberries, blueberry bushes, all along the
19 shoreline. And we would always go pick berries
20 all of the time. And we can't do that today,
21 because the shoreline was eroded so much, or from
22 flooding, all the flooding from all of the
23 different years, you know, there's nothing there
24 anymore.

25 There has just been a lot of changes

1 on our shoreline, in our water, in our community,
2 a lot of drastic changes over the years. Our
3 young people don't even have good stories to tell
4 about our shoreline and our water today. So, it's
5 pretty sad that, you know, we have to still live
6 like that today, because our water -- it's still
7 in bad shape, it's not even healthy to even go
8 into the water.

9 So I just wanted to share a little bit
10 about that, I wanted to just talk a little bit
11 about what I remember and how I feel about how the
12 effects, some of the effects I feel have affected
13 our communities. And it's just, those are the
14 memories that I have and I wanted to share a
15 little bit about that. You know, it's something
16 that I hold close to my heart. These are memories
17 that I have of my community at one time and how it
18 once looked and how we used to enjoy our summer
19 months out on the land, and at these places where
20 recreational activities used to happen, and we
21 can't do that today. So I just wanted to share
22 that. Thank you.

23 WAYNE REDHEAD: Thank you, Jeff
24 Beardy. Okay, Joe Sinclair.

25 JOE SINCLAIR: My name is Joe

1 Sinclair. I moved to York Factory not too long, I
2 would say not too long ago. I do have two things
3 that I have to say. One is after we had moved
4 here, we had one great big effect on my family.
5 We lost my brother, and that was early in the
6 spring. And one of the reasons I think is
7 because -- that contributed to his death was the
8 fact that Hydro did not mark their reefs. And
9 that is one of the things that we asked them to do
10 when they did have a meeting here one time, mark
11 the reefs with strobe lights. And the water was
12 so low that time, he didn't even -- just low
13 enough to cover the reef that he hit, and we lost
14 him from there.

15 My grandchild, one of my
16 granddaughters went downstairs in the rec room at
17 my place about two weeks after, she was playing
18 down in the rec room down at my house. And my
19 wife told me, who is she talking to? So I yelled
20 down the stairs: "Who are you talking to,
21 Savanna?" She yelled back up and said: "I'm
22 having tea with Uncle John. You shouldn't yell
23 down here Grandpa, you scared him, he's gone now."

24 John really loved this community. And
25 he even noticed that there was a lot of stuff

1 going on in the shoreline, whatever. Wherever he
2 went, he would spend a lot of time with his boys
3 walking along the shore. Now those two nephews of
4 mine have no one to walk with them. And they
5 still say, I miss my dad, I wish we could do that
6 again. But it's something that they used to look
7 forward to, walking down the shoreline with their
8 dad. And it hurts to hear them say that. And I
9 don't know, he was pretty good with, he worked
10 along good with Johnny and his outfit there that
11 time, and I thank Johnny for giving him a chance
12 to be employed here in the community. Thank you
13 Johnny. And that was the first part.

14 The second part is, I have a trapline
15 out in Thicket Portage area. And in my mind, I
16 was lied to by Manitoba Hydro and I was threatened
17 a couple of times if I didn't sign for that Bipole
18 III to cross my land. And they literally lied to
19 me and coerced me into signing that agreement,
20 which is something that -- they advised me to get
21 a lawyer, which I didn't. And I don't know what
22 would have become of that agreement if I would
23 have had a lawyer. But on the one hand they said
24 you're not getting nothing, just sign it -- well,
25 I had no choice, I had to sign it. I was lied to

1 and bullied and forced into doing something which
2 I didn't want to do. And I found out later that I
3 was not the only one in that community that was
4 lied to by Manitoba Hydro. Every different one of
5 those trappers that was affected was lied to and
6 bullied into signing.

7 And in that agreement they said you
8 will never -- you can never sue Hydro or employees
9 or anything to that effect, and your children and
10 their children and your whole family cannot go
11 against Hydro in future years, or something like
12 that anyways. Why in the hell can they say
13 something like that to somebody that don't know
14 nothing about what legal ramifications or
15 something like that, and yet they can turn around
16 and do something like reroute or something on a
17 future development and they can get away with it?

18 If they talk to the people in the
19 community and say we're going to have to
20 renegotiate some parts of the agreement, but yet
21 they do not do that, they just go right ahead and
22 do whatever the heck they want. But that's what
23 gets me so frustrated with the Crown corporation
24 that can just do whatever they want and yet we
25 have to suffer because of what they do.

1 Forgive me, I'm getting kind of
2 confused here and a little upset here. But it's
3 hard for me to really think straight sometimes
4 when I get caught up in being frustrated by Hydro
5 and what they can do and what we can't do as a
6 community sometimes. And it's -- it hurts. I
7 can't -- thank you.

8 WAYNE REDHEAD: Thank you, Joseph
9 Sinclair.

10 So maybe at this time we can take a
11 ten minute break, and after the break we can
12 continue on with whoever wants to take the floor.
13 But we'll have a ten minute break for now. Thank
14 you.

15 (RECESS TAKEN)

16 WAYNE REDHEAD: Pretty sure we're all
17 looking forward to a good hearty meal, supper,
18 after the meeting. I'm not too sure what time we
19 are expecting supper to be here. So I will get on
20 with giving the floor to our members.

21 OBAIDIAH WASTESICOOT: (Native
22 language spoken).

23 JIMMY BEARDY: So Elder Obaidiah is
24 telling us about when they first came here, they
25 didn't even know the river system, they didn't

1 even know there was a portage in between here and
2 the railroad where they came down from. And when
3 they first came here they had to pitch tents to
4 live in while their houses were being built. When
5 he first came here, I guess he's talking about
6 1957, there was a lot of wildlife here. The land
7 and waters were good, the fish were good to eat
8 and water was good to drink, even though there was
9 some insects in it, but it was still good to
10 drink. But Kelsey was being built at that time
11 that he's talking about. And then things started
12 to change when the hydro development came about.
13 He started seeing the destruction of our lands and
14 waters over the years. Today he thinks about
15 things like what's the future generation going to
16 have? He believes they will leave this community,
17 because everything is dying around here, wildlife
18 is going and everything is being destroyed. So
19 there is no reason for the younger generation to
20 stick around.

21 One of the things he has a regret,
22 that people don't talk too much about it, Manitoba
23 Hydro, the Provincial Government don't talk about
24 it, is the Northern Flood Agreement of 1977. I
25 worked with Obaidiah here. He was a field worker

1 in '75, when I was working there. And today he
2 mentions about schedule E of the Northern Flood
3 Agreement. Schedule E could have gave us
4 everything that we need in our community
5 structural wise. I remember what he's talking
6 about. It was only Manfred Raybon (ph), Collin
7 Gillespie that told us, tried to show us that
8 schedule E was the best part of that Northern
9 Flood Agreement of 1977. Because in there they
10 told us, our consultants told us you could build
11 anything you want on your reserve and you don't
12 have to worry about paying for it, that would be
13 the responsibility of the Manitoba Government,
14 Manitoba Hydro and the Federal Government. And he
15 says nobody ever wanted to talk about that.

16 I believe too what he is talking
17 about, because I think that's the reason why they
18 conquer and divide us and got rid of the Northern
19 Flood Agreement. Because it would have cost a lot
20 of money to Canada, Manitoba Government and
21 Manitoba Hydro if they had to maintain that
22 schedule E.

23 He thanks you for taking the time to
24 come here to listen to us.

25 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi. That was Elder

1 Obaidiah Wastesicoot with interpretation by,
2 translation by Jimmy Beardy. Next we have Donna
3 Saunders.

4 DONNA SAUNDERS: Hello, my name is
5 Donna Saunders, a York Factory member. I work at
6 the implementation office here.

7 Some of the effects I face living in
8 Northern Manitoba are the water flows, the water
9 releases, especially this time of year. One year
10 we asked Manitoba Hydro, we requested Manitoba
11 Hydro to not release water during our ice
12 freeze-up so we could work on our ice crossing in
13 Split Lake there, winter road. And it hasn't been
14 like a continued effort on their part. It's like
15 we have to request it every year. And that's not,
16 it's not happening. So we have to construct our
17 winter road every year, and we continue using it
18 until spring thaw, even though it's closed we
19 still use it. It is pretty hard when we're
20 isolated during fall and spring. We do everything
21 that we can to travel out by boat, by ferry, by
22 snowmobiles and trucks. We go right until we
23 can't move. And that's all because of cost and
24 freight. Most of us that work, we chip in for a
25 charter and we make sacrifices, we don't pay our

1 Hydro bill, we don't pay -- like one of our
2 necessities, I guess, like phone bills too and
3 stuff like that.

4 And we see a lot of the erosion
5 happening, especially this past year. There was
6 high water this year and we seen a lot of erosion.
7 There's a lot of -- there was a lot of debris,
8 like even small sticks, small trees. And there is
9 deadwood out there, you have to be careful in
10 travel.

11 And another concern I had too is
12 during like the fall, when the water system comes
13 from springtime to the summer, it reaches us here.
14 By fall time there's like green or blue algae.
15 And I think that's from the farmers, they use
16 those pesticides and it all comes here. And when
17 you go fish for pike, when you cut it open, or
18 even okaw, pickerel, they are blue. Like you see
19 the blue and you say, oh my God, should we even
20 eat this? Like is this something that's not good?

21 And I think about the water treatment
22 plant also, like how much, how much can it take?
23 How much -- like can we keep up with chemicals,
24 can we -- how much -- like what's the real level,
25 I guess.

1 And I was just thinking too about
2 subsidies and stuff like that during spring and
3 fall, thaw and freeze-up. If there's any way that
4 we can be subsidized even for our tickets and
5 freight charges? One box, like if you send a
6 box -- like I sent a box home of fruit and
7 vegetables, I didn't want them to freeze on the
8 winter road, 60 bucks for a tiny box. And I was
9 just surprised.

10 And Northern Store, they were given
11 subsidies, money to subsidize like milk and stuff,
12 eggs, but now it's being taken away, there is
13 changes being made. So we need more subsidy
14 programs in our community.

15 Another thing that came up for me this
16 morning when we were having our Remembrance Day
17 service here is a woman was mentioning a grave
18 site she's looking for. Her grandfather was -- he
19 went to war, World War I and II, and it's been 100
20 years, it marks for their family the loss of her
21 grandfather. And he had a trapline, Kettle, and
22 they have been trying to search for the grave, but
23 they think it is all washed away by hydro
24 development.

25 So I was thinking, like Keeyask has a

1 grave site, and I think we should look for our
2 graves. It is -- after all, this is a meeting of
3 regional community effects of all of the hydro
4 dams. And what Keeyask did, where they're working
5 at, they had a plane go around and like they did
6 kind of sensor or photos to see if there's any
7 graves where they're going to be working by Bipole
8 or the Keeyask area, they said they circled around
9 and they didn't find anything. The one grave
10 that's over there at Keeyask, the grave was
11 falling into the river. So that's why that grave
12 was there. So that would be my request, if we
13 could like scan the whole area again where it has
14 been affected like with Kelsey and all of the
15 other dams up ahead here, Limestone, Long Spruce
16 and Kettle. So that would be my request, and
17 maybe bring them back to Keeyask cemetery there.
18 That's my wish.

19 And the last thing I wanted to mention
20 was the railway effects, like what's been
21 happening with the high water and the Diversion.
22 We had really high water this year and it affected
23 our rail to Churchill. And that's where we
24 harvest too. People were stranded up there.
25 There was -- we had to get our people home

1 somehow. That cost us a lot of money. But they
2 were stuck up there. They went by rail and a lot
3 of the -- couple of places were totally washed
4 out. And that effect is from the Nelson River and
5 the Churchill River Diversion diverted a lot of
6 the water, I guess, so York and Split would have
7 been under, if they didn't do that.

8 But that's another thing I wanted to
9 mention is they cut the rail service down. So
10 we're affected that way. And they're limiting the
11 cars. They serviced us for a few years and the
12 three cars, the passengers they did have
13 overflowed. So I don't know how it's going to be
14 this season.

15 So those are just some of the effects
16 I wanted to mention. Egosi, thank you.

17 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi, Donna Saunders.
18 Anybody else before I take the floor? Who?
19 Doreen? Doreen is going to speak, Doreen
20 Saunders.

21 DOREEN SAUNDERS: Hello, my name is
22 Doreen Saunders. I wanted to start off by, when
23 we first moved over here, like everybody said the
24 land was good, water, a lot of wildlife, and it's
25 a good place to start off, until the Hydro came

1 in. I remember that night there, probably about
2 10:30 at night time, why won't Hydro come to a
3 house at that time of the night I thought? I was
4 sitting there with my mom and dad, they had a
5 kerosene lamp going and my mom was skinning a
6 beaver. And there was a knock on the door and
7 this guy, Clark Butler was his name, I believe.
8 We told him to come in and he put his hand on the
9 wall and said, wouldn't it be nice if you just put
10 your hand on the wall and pull a switch? So
11 that's the beginning of Hydro.

12 And we didn't say anything of course.
13 And as time went on, next thing -- I don't know
14 how much longer, but I saw these Hydro poles start
15 going up. And I remember Raymond Beardy going
16 around to all of the houses looking for a cook for
17 the Hydro guys, they needed a cook. And guess who
18 ended up cooking? Right, me. And I can't
19 remember if they ever paid me, to tell you the
20 truth. Anyways, I don't know how long I cooked
21 for them.

22 And as time went on, I started to see
23 the destruction of the land, the water. I
24 remember taking a ride to the Landing River with
25 my dad in a canoe. And on the way back there was

1 a lot of water lilies, muskrats, just beautiful.
2 And you don't see that anymore. And I was talking
3 about the destruction that Hydro has done. It
4 didn't take long.

5 And I remember too when we first got
6 here, I remember the women, when we first moved
7 over here, I used to hear them screaming, laughing
8 and everything, because they were busy chasing
9 squirrels from tree to tree, and that is a lot of
10 joy for them. But you don't see any squirrels
11 around anymore, not even any frogs nowadays. I'm
12 always harping on frogs. And I miss that. And
13 yeah, the water is pretty high and dangerous.

14 And when they were talking about the
15 ferry, I have a concern about that too. Like that
16 one time, I remember that one time we were going
17 to -- there was a lot of people going on the ferry
18 because it was that time of the year when Thompson
19 has its Nickel Days. Boy, that was scary, just
20 like it was going to tip right over. And it
21 wasn't like that when the ferry first started
22 running. It was the high waters I guess that --
23 it is pretty bad now, I would be scared to go on
24 there. Especially in October while it's still
25 running, you're freezing inside the cabin because

1 there is nothing but ice on the ramp or whatever.

2 When we first moved here, my
3 parents -- I have a handicap from birth -- when we
4 got here my parents didn't coddle me, I worked
5 just as hard as they did. I hauled water from the
6 lake, and go to the lake and chisel, it was good
7 water, or I would go out in the deep snow, my
8 mother would make me mukluks or something and I
9 would go in the deep snow, sweep away the top of
10 the snow to get to the crystal part. That was our
11 drinking water too. And I worked hard, and I'm
12 glad that they taught me how to work hard. They
13 didn't coddle me at all.

14 Okay. Now, the thing I'm concerned
15 about is that twice a year, in the spring and the
16 fall, we're isolated. And every year it seems
17 that the fares to fly out of here is getting more
18 and more higher. That's Perimeter. From here to
19 Thompson is a 20 minute ride and that's about
20 what, \$300 one way. And I talked to somebody, I
21 have a granddaughter that's living in Brochet and
22 I asked her how much she paid, she said 300 bucks.
23 And my brother is living in Churchill, they pay
24 the same price, \$300. And we're what, 20 minutes
25 away? That's stupid. It shouldn't even be like

1 that.

2 So, like Donna was talking about the
3 railroad, that's going to cost us more now that
4 the train is only running I think once a week,
5 from what I heard. So I don't know, we're going
6 to have to take chances on the winter road and
7 that's not very -- that doesn't look good at all.
8 Because we don't know where the weak spots are
9 going to be with the weather changing all the
10 time. Those are some of my concerns.

11 And the Northern Store, of course,
12 their prices seem to be going up every two weeks
13 or so, especially with the milk products. And
14 those are what we need the most here. I for one
15 didn't want a Northern Store here in the first
16 place.

17 And yeah, that's about all that I can
18 think of right now, but I've got lots to say about
19 Hydro, which I prefer not to say right now. Thank
20 you.

21 STELLA CHAPMAN: Doreen told me to
22 tell my story. So, I moved here in 1968, and I
23 didn't really like the place. That has nothing to
24 do with what we're talking about today. But I was
25 asked to share my story. Okay.

1 Well, my husband didn't live long
2 enough to teach my kids how to live the
3 traditional way, like hunting and all of that. It
4 was through Albert, my son-in-law, my daughter's
5 husband that's teaching her everything, like how
6 to survive. And my son-in-law used to take me all
7 over the place with his family, her family. We
8 spent a couple of nights in the Big Time, I think
9 they called it, hunting geese and all of that. We
10 would eat out there. They took me to River Forest
11 where they were fishing. He said, here, I will
12 teach you how to fish. I said I don't even know
13 the first thing about fishing. He gives me a rod,
14 I caught one. It's too small, throw it back in
15 there. I said why are you teaching me?

16 And we also went to Isaac's cabin,
17 it's a really nice place there. Now hardly
18 anybody goes there because it is flooded. That
19 was a nice place.

20 And I remember a bunch of kids going
21 to the Bare Ass Beach camping. I enjoyed those
22 kind of things, but now I never -- those things
23 don't happen anymore. I miss that kind of life.

24 And I used to like berry picking, but
25 since I got lost in the bush nobody wants to take

1 me in the bush anymore.

2 That's the end of my story.

3 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi. That was
4 Stella Chapman. So we will have Isaac Beardy?

5 ISAAC BEARDY: (Speaking native
6 language.)

7 JIMMY BEARDY: Okay. Elder Isaac
8 Beardy was just talking about that he believes
9 that the winter roads that this causes us to take
10 is unsafe and become more unsafe, and that he is
11 in favour of building a road another way around,
12 where it would be a lot safer for our people.

13 WAYNE REDHEAD: Jim?

14 JIMMY BEARDY: I don't know if I said
15 this in English, I remember saying it in Cree, but
16 I work with Roy Redhead, he's my boss. And he
17 wanted a message to be conveyed to you
18 commissioners. He says that pre-project --
19 initially I saw one massive project that has been
20 piecemealed -- is that Northern Manitoba would
21 have been a veritable paradise with an abundance
22 of fish and fowl and good drinking water. And he
23 believes that as far as our work goes, we are only
24 progressing as much as we are able with the
25 further research that we do.

1 The submission to the RCEA from the
2 York Factory First Nation is only a snapshot of
3 what we are, of what we can capture, before they
4 substantiate analysis of the whole hydrological
5 regime right down to the estuary -- he's talking
6 about the Hudson Bay -- the capture before the
7 estuary is what he's talking about. The
8 recommendations contained in our submission are
9 very good ones for us. We believe that.

10 Mr. Redhead also says, it is
11 interesting to note that there is hardly any
12 environmental monitoring of the system. In
13 Manitoba Hydro's supporting documentation for
14 their request for a final licence for the
15 Churchill River Diversion and the Augmented Flow
16 Program, Manitoba Conservation stated
17 categorically that there is no need for an
18 environmental assessment for the CRD and the AFP
19 under the Environment Act.

20 Mr. Redhead, though, says when you
21 think about 100 miles of the river system between
22 Lake Winnipeg Regulation and the CRD and AFP, the
23 environmental damage this has caused with -- these
24 are Manitoba Hydro's words -- unprecedented high
25 waters, and it is very concerning for Mr. Redhead

1 to know that the Manitoba Government has not
2 grasped the need for an environmental assessment
3 of the entire system, given the amount of water
4 entering the system and Manitoba Hydro's ability
5 to regulate as they see fit. He wants you
6 commissioners to remember it is not Manitoba
7 Hydro's water. That's what -- I might have forgot
8 to bring that out when I delivered my submission.

9 WAYNE REDHEAD: He was reading a
10 statement from Roy Redhead. Next we've got George
11 Beardy, Councillor George Beardy.

12 GEORGE BEARDY: I just wanted to -- I
13 think what Isaac was saying here was that it takes
14 a while for the winter road to get going, even
15 though we have a crew out there in the middle of
16 November working on it, and to get to the ice they
17 have to wait. And once they do work on it, Hydro
18 lets out water at Kelsey, and then when we have a
19 bunch of water on top of the ice, or even lifting
20 up the ice after it's frozen. It cracks along the
21 shoreline and there is water that comes out along
22 the shoreline. Then we have to wait another two
23 or three weeks before that freezes up good enough
24 to cross. I was just going to mention that, I
25 think that's what he was talking about.

1 I was talking about water quality. I
2 know there is a lot of talk about that water
3 quality, potable water. I wasn't here when York
4 Landing moved. I didn't move with them, but I did
5 come here in 1973. I remember when I was staying
6 with my mom, she would send me to get water, go
7 down to the lake. And looking at the water, you
8 see how clear it was, just scooping up the water
9 and taking it home, and we would drink that. And
10 a lot of people were doing that in the community
11 at that time. Then I left, because it was just my
12 holidays for a couple of weeks, then I left.

13 I came back in 1983, back into the
14 community permanently. And at the time that I
15 moved here we had a standby pump where people
16 would get the water from, and it came from a small
17 water plant. Now, I don't even know if it was
18 treated. Does anybody know if it was treated at
19 the time? It just came straight from the lake and
20 then pumped in the water standby, right? I don't
21 think that we got treated water until we got that
22 new water treatment plant. I forget what year
23 that was.

24 I guess what I'm saying is, water is
25 supposed to be a resource that's free, that we

1 should be able to get it anywhere without paying
2 for it. Now we have to pay for it, even though we
3 think it's free coming into the house, because the
4 water treatment plant has to be maintained. The
5 water has to be treated and you need money to do
6 that. You go to the store to get good water.
7 Right now it's sitting at \$40 for 24 bottles, you
8 know, a case of water, 40 bucks. And you can get
9 that even in Thompson like for \$10 or less, but
10 still, you're still paying for it. That's a
11 resource that should be free, and it was free in
12 1973 when I was here.

13 And then you hear stories throughout
14 the years about especially trapping, I hear people
15 talking about they'd have muskrats, they'd have
16 beavers. They would trap along the river, along
17 shorelines. And now you can't do that. I think
18 back when I moved here in 1983, nobody was really
19 catching anything.

20 Fish, it's got mercury in it now. You
21 have to watch how much you eat. In 1983, '85,
22 they did a study on a community of people, some of
23 the people in the community and they found it
24 wasn't really high, but there was some. It showed
25 that there was mercury in some of the people here

1 that were eating fish. What I was surprised at
2 was the ones between 30 and 35, who are carrying,
3 pregnant at that time, they were higher than
4 anybody else.

5 And now -- but Hydro right now is also
6 going to be doing another study as to the mercury
7 intake of the people of this community, not just
8 this community, but Tataskweyak, Fox Lake, War
9 Lake. So there's a big change in that too, what
10 people can eat. I guess fish used to be a very
11 staple food for the community. Now I don't -- and
12 they used to go out and fish quite a bit, catch
13 their own. Now hardly anybody goes out. I think
14 I can only recall three, maybe three people going
15 out every now and then. Not like -- not like I
16 used to see. When I was visiting here in 1973, I
17 remember the men coming up with tubs of fish for
18 the community. Now, you don't even -- I try to
19 ask a fisherman for a fish, they say I don't have
20 any right now, or I didn't catch any, yeah, or I
21 just got this. But that's one of big changes, the
22 potable, the drinkable water in this community and
23 how we have to pay for it now.

24 The other, one of the other things too
25 is the water fowl. I remember people eating ducks

1 during pretty well any time of the year, during
2 summer. But because of the water dropping every
3 now and then through the years, they don't come
4 back if they lose their nesting areas.

5 Even the seagulls, I remember riding
6 on a barge watching the seagulls hovering over
7 this island. And I was talking to a cousin of
8 mine, and I would ask him, look at all of the
9 seagulls. Well, yeah, he says, they're nesting
10 there. You should have seen them before years
11 ago, he said, there used to be lots more than
12 that, he said. Now because the water came up one
13 year, no island, no seagulls, they must have gone
14 some place else, I don't know where. They've lost
15 their nesting area too, that particular year. And
16 then I remember going by there the following year,
17 I didn't see hardly any seagulls flying around
18 that island.

19 And people talk about berry picking
20 too, you don't see that anymore either. Anyway,
21 thanks.

22 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi. Thank you,
23 George Beardy, Councillor George Beardy.

24 I believe that the seagulls went to
25 the top of the Split Lake arena, that's where they

1 go to roost.

2 Anybody else here? No? Flora, sorry
3 about that, Flora. Flora Beardy has got the mic
4 and she has got the floor, so pay attention.

5 FLORA BEARDY: That's it. My name is
6 Flora Beardy and I'm with York Factory First
7 Nation. I don't know where to start here. I like
8 to thank the Commission for coming in to listen to
9 us. It is very important that we get all of our
10 comments, our issues out to somebody that will
11 listen to us and what we have to say.

12 Where am I going to start? They say
13 home is where the heart is. Well, I've had a few
14 homes during my life time. My first one was, my
15 birthplace at Tastamawaga, which is way up the
16 coast towards to Ontario. My second one was York
17 Factory, which we left in 1952 because the post
18 was going to close. Then my father wanted to go
19 to Gillam and look for work, but when we got to
20 the tracks at mile 374, my mother was sick. The
21 nearest hospital was Churchill, so that's where we
22 went and we stayed there, I stayed there for over
23 40 years. I was hoping there would be somebody
24 here from Churchill to come and talk about the
25 effects of the Churchill River Diversion.

1 But while growing up in Churchill it
2 was -- I just remember the reverse, being so
3 lovely. Every summer we would have about four
4 canoes go, with four families go across the river
5 and go pick berries. This is what we did every
6 summer. And then we would come back. If we
7 stayed there long enough, if we overnighted, we'd
8 have nets and we would set the nets and catch
9 fish. That was a beautiful memory that I have.

10 And the other one is growing up, we
11 could set our nets anytime in the Churchill River
12 and we could catch our fish. We used to be able
13 to travel right from town, down the flats to go
14 all the way up the river without hitting a rock.
15 The last trip I made up there was in '95, 1995
16 before we left to come here. We didn't even make
17 it halfway up when we hit the first rock, halfway
18 before we got to Mosquito Point. So that's how
19 dirty the water was by then. This was after the
20 Diversion. And when we got further up, we
21 couldn't even see the fish in the water. We used
22 to be able to see our fish in the water. The
23 Belugas that would swim beside you, they were so
24 nice and clear, we couldn't see them then because
25 the water was dirty.

1 It was that time when we left around
2 '95, I think it was about five years later when my
3 late brother set his net down the flats to catch
4 some ciscos or whatever, and he said the fish were
5 terrible there, the texture was really soft.

6 When I lived there, before the
7 Diversion, we used to set our net out there, my
8 husband and I, and we would catch good fish. The
9 texture was good, the taste was good. But in the
10 summer we used to have two Char runs, Arctic Char
11 runs in the summer, July and August, and we knew
12 when that was going to happen because of the
13 bulldogs, or the horse flies you call them. And
14 when there's a storm coming, electrical storm,
15 then we knew there'd be lots of bulldogs, and then
16 right after that storm they're dead. And they're
17 all in the water and that's what the fish were
18 eating. So we would get maybe eight or ten in one
19 run, and then two during the summer, you know,
20 that's a lot of Char, so we used to share that.
21 But, you know, this isn't happening now. There's
22 one person that set -- he set his net in Button
23 Bay, and that's the only place where he could
24 catch good fish, because they're no good now on
25 the river.

1 We used to go fish at Goose Creek
2 every spring. And now my auntie says the fish
3 there are no good either, so they don't go fish
4 there anymore.

5 I go back to Churchill every once in a
6 while and I see the effects of the Churchill River
7 Diversion. There is big rocks along the shore
8 that you never saw before downtown. If you're
9 going to go up the river, you have to go up to
10 where the marina is, which is how many miles away,
11 probably 10 miles away. And you would have to go
12 from there to go up the river. And even today
13 people are saying that it's not safe because you
14 can't see the rocks, the water is dirty.

15 So when we left, I left Churchill to
16 come here, and that's 20 years ago, 21 years, I've
17 seen some changes while I was here. But the
18 changes that I know of are what the elders have
19 told me in their interviews and their stories of
20 how beautiful it was here when they first came.
21 Like Obaidiah, he was asked to guide these people
22 here from Landing River and he didn't know where
23 he was going, because he had never -- they had
24 never been in this area before. You know, and he
25 talks about how nice the water was, the animals,

1 the fish were good. There was one member that
2 told me that they even had kingfishers here, and
3 now there is none. Doreen talks about frogs.
4 Even the kids mentioned that in the school one
5 year that there is no more frogs here, they are
6 only little tiny ones. They used to have big
7 frogs I guess.

8 I can't -- one year they had a fish
9 taste here put on by Hydro, I forget what year,
10 2009 I think, somewhere around there. Anyway they
11 got fish from Nosigot Lake, from this area and
12 around Split Lake and they had a fish tasting.
13 And the worst tasting fish came from this area.
14 It wasn't put like that in the report that Hydro
15 put out. But the person that -- I was told by a
16 person from Hydro, that worked for Hydro, that
17 that is where the worst tasting fish came from.
18 But what they used was numbers, percentage, the
19 lowest percentage, but they didn't say where. But
20 you know, it's true.

21 We have a goose camp every year where
22 the resource people bring geese, anything, geese,
23 ducks, if they have beaver, I've never seen a
24 muskrat for a long time. But we get fish too, and
25 it seems like you have to go further to get good

1 fish.

2 So far we haven't seen any fish at,
3 you know, that you couldn't eat, but some people
4 have seen deformed fish. Isaac has seen fish with
5 no jaw. You know, like what happened there? But
6 this is something that we have to be so careful
7 about because we have the children there, we have
8 the whole community there at our goose camp. What
9 about the birds? What are they eating down south
10 and coming here? That's the only time that we get
11 geese here is in the spring. In the fall they
12 just fly right by. And this year the men couldn't
13 hunt because of the high water. Somebody's blind
14 floated away, you know.

15 That's another thing that happened too
16 in Churchill was the flooding, because they had to
17 let that water out at Missi Falls.

18 I really -- it's really, really hard,
19 you know, because I left one home to come here,
20 and what I see is going on in Churchill, it really
21 hurts me and sometimes I just don't feel like
22 going back there. And I'm here and I see what's
23 happening here too, and I know this will probably
24 be my home for the rest of my life. But, you
25 know, it's really hard, because I think a lot of

1 our children don't even know what's going on in
2 their community. And you know, when you live in a
3 community, you love your community, you love your
4 home, you love your family, friends. And I think
5 it's so important that the parents tell these
6 children what's going on. When they ask you, how
7 come I have to go out there to school? Tell them
8 why, you know, because there is higher grades
9 out -- why can't we have those higher grades in
10 our own community?

11 This is the legacy that Manitoba Hydro
12 has left us; water that we can't drink, water that
13 the children can't even swim in. The water
14 treatment plant for a long time functioned on one
15 pump, when it should be an A1 class building.
16 There are no recreation buildings for the
17 children. They should have a drop-in centre where
18 they can go in the evening, instead of running
19 around everywhere else and getting into mischief.
20 You know, there are programs that you can run in
21 the evening for the children. All the school kids
22 should have a computer, and that's not available.
23 Each one should have their own computer to work
24 with. And this should have all been paid by
25 Hydro.

1 So is that the legacy that they leave
2 us? It will never get better. The water, you
3 know, that will never come back, the animals. The
4 fish, once they're gone, they're gone. You know,
5 it's really hard. So I think it's really
6 important that we tell our children what is going
7 on. We don't know what is going to happen in the
8 future. We can speculate I guess. But like
9 Obaidiah says, I don't think there is going to be
10 too much here for anyone in the future, which is
11 why the youth have to be prepared for that.

12 I have a dream that the future
13 generation move back to York Factory and go build
14 a home there. But, you know, that will only
15 happen if we all work together with the
16 leadership, you know, and you would have your own
17 land here. We feel like this isn't our land.
18 That's the dream I have for the future generation
19 is to go back to York Factory and then establish a
20 reserve there. You would have your own community.

21 I've heard one Hydro person say that
22 there will never ever be a dam built on the Hayes
23 River. And I think there's a few people here
24 heard that person say that too at goose camp,
25 there will never be a dam built on Hayes River. I

1 said, would you say that again? And the person
2 said it again. I said, did everybody hear that?
3 Yes. Well, it's a heritage river, but that
4 doesn't stop Hydro, I guess, from building
5 whatever they want. But I really, really stress
6 that our youth be taught everything that they
7 should know about Manitoba Hydro. And how are
8 they going to work together with them if they're
9 destroying everything that, you know, that gave us
10 life?

11 Same thing with traditional knowledge,
12 Manitoba Hydro said, oh, you know, we will put it
13 in our reports when we get it. The thing is they
14 can't put it in their reports, they don't have it
15 because they can't find any, there is no books
16 written on traditional knowledge. All of the
17 knowledge that our ancestors had and what we have
18 was passed down orally. So, you know, there is
19 still -- and if they did have it, what would they
20 do with it? It's supposed to be used equally as
21 western science. But I was telling our committee
22 there that they should bring those people here to
23 the community and we'll take them out on the land
24 and we'll show them. You know, traditional
25 knowledge is very vast, it's very, very important,

1 because that's what kept our people alive for
2 thousands of years. It's very important to us.
3 So maybe by working together we can get them to
4 come and find out how to set a snare or whatever.

5 We were talking about water. My
6 husband said when they were first here in the late
7 '60s, they were able to get ice from the middle of
8 the river. That's what they used for water and
9 water was still good then. In Churchill we used
10 to go across the river and in the middle of the
11 river, you will find a stream right in the middle
12 that's freshwater, and most of that is all salt,
13 but you'll find it. And we did it before we left
14 Churchill, again, my husband and I went across,
15 and I had a cup and I scooped up some water and we
16 found that freshwater. But water, like Councillor
17 George was saying, we have to pay so much for
18 water. And if you don't drink good water, you're
19 going to get sick. The same thing, there is
20 nobody from Health here talking about what they
21 see at the nursing station regarding how the water
22 affects the children -- not only the children, the
23 elders, you know, it's sad. I wish that was
24 available by someone from Health.

25 I guess I better stop now. Wayne is

1 looking at me. But that's, I think that's
2 everything that I wanted to say, yeah. Egosi.
3 Thank you for listening to me.

4 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi Flora.
5 Actually, that was Serge that was looking at you.
6 Okay. Anybody else want to add? Okay, Johnny,
7 Johnny Saunders.

8 JOHNNY SAUNDERS: Hello, I'm Johnny
9 Saunders, I'm a community member. I've lived here
10 in York Landing all of my life, went to school for
11 a few years and always been back here. You know,
12 growing up I went hunting, I went fishing. I
13 still do hunting when, you know, there's caribou
14 around or in the fall for moose and, you know, the
15 spring moose hunt and pickerel run in the spring.
16 You know, all of that you're either on the lake,
17 you know, you're on the trail, you're on the ice,
18 stuff like that. You notice, you know, you notice
19 the difference in the water levels and stuff like
20 that while you're doing this stuff, you know. And
21 that's brought on by spring runoff, and also by
22 Manitoba Hydro's operation of the river, you know,
23 regulating the water flows. And you know, a lot
24 of water is released in the springtime through,
25 you know, Jenpeg, Kelsey, and you know, Churchill

1 River Diversion. It all ends up in this lake
2 here. And you know, it affects our travel
3 throughout the year.

4 You know, there's a ferry service at
5 York Landing, but people have their own boats,
6 motors, and stuff like that, so that brings on a
7 whole, I guess challenges just doing that. You
8 know, some of the times, like in spring time we're
9 talking about goose hunting and later on pickerel
10 run down the river here. You're able to,
11 sometimes you're able to travel on the ice that
12 way a bit, and then you've got to start, either
13 start walking or you can jump in the boat and head
14 down there. But it's something that the community
15 has always done and continues to do. But there
16 is, I guess, problems that arise with water
17 fluctuations and things like that, water levels.

18 You know, this spring people are
19 talking about, you know, the amount of water that
20 was in the system and, you know, how high the
21 water was here in York Landing. A lot of the
22 shoreline protection and the causeway was actually
23 under water by almost two feet. And you know,
24 things like that, when they have been -- you can't
25 do the things -- either hunting, because that

1 happens along the shoreline. You build your
2 blinds and you do your goose hunting there. And
3 then in the springtime when the pickerel started
4 running, we are up there by the portage probably
5 about four miles down the river and, you know, you
6 can't snare fish in the river because the water is
7 so high. You know, the water is so high it's past
8 the willows, and you can't stand where you usually
9 stood the year before and harvest your pickerel.
10 And you know, that's what happened this year, this
11 spring.

12 And now, you know, just this fall
13 Wayne, Donna and I went for a helicopter tour to
14 take pictures of what the changes were and, you
15 know, looking at other shoreline protection
16 projects. We also went to look at cabins that
17 were impacted by this water level rise this spring
18 along the rivers.

19 And you know, I think it was
20 October 20th, and when we were flying down the
21 river we were taking pictures of the river. And
22 in spots you could see the bottom of river, like
23 it's only a foot or two deep. And in the
24 springtime it's almost eight feet higher. You
25 know, that's how much of a fluctuation it is at

1 times.

2 And that happened a few times in the
3 last ten years. And every time something like
4 that happens, high water level Manitoba calls it,
5 well, it's a one in 100 years. It happens in two
6 years, well, it's one in 200 years. And the next
7 one, one in 300 years, you know, just to put their
8 spin on it. But we are the ones that are impacted
9 by that fluctuation.

10 In the fall it's usually down quite a
11 bit and it impacts our hunting too, because we are
12 out hunting in boats for moose and stuff like
13 that. And where you go in the springtime, you can
14 ride over reefs and stuff because they're four
15 feet underwater. And then in the fall you ride by
16 and you have to go around these reefs that you've
17 driven over in the springtime. And you know, you
18 have got to be aware of where they are.

19 I know a lot of the people that were,
20 you know, fishing, commercial fishing years ago
21 know all of these places because the water was
22 lower back then, and they're aware of all of the
23 different places where I guess there used to be
24 islands, they're now reefs. You know, they used
25 to have trees on them, nowadays they're reefs.

1 Whenever the water does drop low enough, they're
2 rocks now. I guess those are things that I guess
3 impact us.

4 Other things too, people talk about,
5 you know, the winter road. Over the last about
6 five or six years I've been managing the contract
7 for the winter road. The Provincial Government
8 provides a contract to the First Nation to
9 construct the winter road. And it's about 20
10 or -- no, 32 kilometres, probably about 28 of
11 those are over land. And then in the past it was
12 six kilometres -- they changed the location of the
13 winter road on the Nelson River at Split Lake
14 probably two years ago. And you know, there is so
15 much money that's allocated for the contract
16 itself, but the bulk of the money is spent
17 crossing the Nelson River, because you've got to
18 put so much labour into it, you've got to have so
19 many guys there flooding. And it's dangerous
20 work.

21 And you know, over the past few years,
22 you know, there's tractor that's gone through
23 there. It wasn't on the winter road, it was on a
24 trail. There has also been a truck that's gone
25 through there in the last few years, and that was

1 also on a trail.

2 There's probably three different, you
3 know, things that are referred to when you're
4 crossing the ice. One of them over there is the
5 winter road, and then there is Manitoba Hydro's
6 Safe Trails Program, which marks a trail where we
7 are safest, and then there is the trappers
8 crossing. You know, those things are all there.
9 And people, because of like what was being said
10 today, you know, it's so high priced to fly in and
11 out of here, it costs so much to ship food and
12 stuff like. It's cheaper to go out by snowmobile
13 or truck and pick up your food and bring it back.
14 You know, those are the things that make people
15 leave the community to go do those types of
16 things.

17 And you know, you have years -- some
18 years people cross early on the old, I guess their
19 own private trails, you know, with snowmobiles or
20 trucks or whatnot, but it's something that happens
21 on a yearly basis. And you know, it's dangerous,
22 you know, with what's going on there with the
23 river system. I mean, you call it Split Lake but
24 it's basically a river. You know, right there
25 it's a two kilometre channel and, you know, the

1 water goes so fast there and, you know, depending
2 on how much water they're releasing, it picks up
3 and you know -- like I said, I have been out there
4 working for the last five or six years managing
5 the contract. But in the previous years I think
6 Howard Saunders managed it probably maybe 20
7 years. He is out working in Keeyask right now.
8 But those are the types of things that people face
9 just living here in York Landing because of the
10 cost of the air fare and freight and those types
11 of things. And those are things that we face
12 crossing that river.

13 And even from the travel perspective,
14 you know, the province runs the airport here, they
15 also run the ferry service. People talked in the
16 past, there has even been presentations here about
17 the province putting in a highway here. I'm not
18 sure if those are -- I think that option is gone
19 now with the current government here in the
20 province. But one of the things I was thinking
21 about is that, you know, with the ferry service
22 and the airstrip, how are those going to be
23 impacted if we do get a highway in here? There is
24 no -- I think there is nine people that are
25 employed between the two, and that's nine families

1 that won't have an income anymore if we have a
2 highway, and there is no way that we are going to
3 have nine people employed on the highway, if that
4 ever happened.

5 One of the things that I would like to
6 see is a shortened ferry route so that, you know,
7 it won't take so long traveling in and out, and
8 that those jobs will remain for the people that
9 are working there and for the future. And you
10 know, I don't want to see it go all the way to
11 Split Lake, it would just go across the lake, and
12 then a highway, I think it's only 10 kilometres to
13 PR280 from there. So it would be like an hour's
14 trip and it would save, you know, those jobs for
15 the people that are employed there and their
16 families. And also our airstrip will still be
17 here and people working there will still have
18 employment, you know. But that's something,
19 that's something else.

20 One of the things I wanted to talk
21 about too was hunting. We used to have, we used
22 to hunt caribou here in the fall and in the
23 winter, depending on when they would come through.
24 I remember there used to be caribou running
25 through the community a few winters. And over the

1 past years, trying to hunt we would have to go
2 towards Ilford or even further to look for
3 caribou. And some of the things we heard is that,
4 you know, Conservation may be herding the caribou
5 by helicopter and making them go another route. I
6 don't know if that's true or not. But I remember
7 when I was hunting caribou out there, I remember a
8 helicopter flying over me, you know, where the
9 caribou were after we had got a few of them, you
10 know, they flew around and then they flew away
11 after that. But, you know, usually that doesn't
12 happen.

13 We had, one winter we went to the Big
14 Stone River area, Traverse, Morris and Darryl
15 Beardy, and we got woodland caribou out there.
16 And we had to come -- we brought a few of them
17 back, and then we had to go back the next day with
18 Darcy Wastesicoot and bring the rest back. But
19 that's quite a long ways out of Ilford. It's
20 almost like halfway to Oxford House. You have to
21 go a long ways sometimes to hunt. And we did --
22 just here in this area, I got another woodland
23 caribou right down the river where Isaac has his
24 cabin there. The one year they were migrating,
25 there was a lot of caribou, and there was a few

1 woodlands around with them.

2 So, you know, those types of things --
3 and you always have got to be on the river for
4 that, the lake, and at times you're going through
5 slush and stuff like that just to be out there
6 hunting. That's what I think about the Hydro
7 development thing.

8 Another thing too is the different
9 power lines. You talk about Bipole III and all of
10 the clearing that's going on there and, you know,
11 people are told to stay out of that area while the
12 construction is going on until it's operational, I
13 guess, but that's something that you can't go on.

14 One of the -- we also have an AC line
15 just south of York Landing here, and that was
16 cleared last, most of it was cleared between
17 Gillam and Kelsey last year, there is still a
18 small portion to be cleared. But what they've
19 done is that they, you know, they just plowed
20 everything down where it stood. And you know, one
21 winter, one road has gone through there, but
22 everything else is laying down. Whereas in the
23 past people were able to travel along those lines
24 or right under the lines, you know, by snowmobile
25 or ATV. Now it's just one big mess.

1 One of the things that happened last
2 year is there was a big blizzard near the end of,
3 I think it was the end of April -- in March, yeah,
4 the winter road was basically shut down after
5 that, and it was a big problem for everybody.

6 Which brings me back to this thing,
7 this clear cutting that Manitoba Hydro has done
8 just south of here, leaving all of that mess, you
9 know, I think they shouldn't just leave it like
10 that. You know, I think they should involve our
11 community and communities along the way to clean
12 that up. A lot of that stuff can be used for
13 firewood, you know, it's been laying there, it's
14 got to be cleaned up. But I think they should put
15 some money in that to create employment for the
16 community members here and along the way, you
17 know, to harvest that instead of it just being
18 left there, you know, and nobody being able to use
19 it. Like that can create some employment too for
20 our community members over the winter. And if
21 there ever is a blackout or anything like that,
22 community members would have firewood here. We
23 had that happen one fall where the power went out
24 for like 44 hours and a lot of people didn't have
25 firewood and stuff like that. I think they had to

1 send people out because there weren't those types
2 of resources here at the time.

3 I think that might be about it, Wayne.
4 Thanks.

5 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi, Johnny. We
6 have Councillor Leroy Constant.

7 COUNCILLOR CONSTANT: Yes, good
8 afternoon. Leroy Constant, community member but
9 also council member.

10 There is a couple of things that I
11 want to highlight in regards to I guess the
12 concerns coming out of York Landing. Number one
13 is the dangerous conditions along the waterways in
14 the summer as well as the winter. Being a council
15 member for the First Nation, you receive these
16 calls firsthand from concerned community members
17 of the well-being of hunters, and people like our
18 front line workers that are constructing the ice,
19 you know, there is not a day goes by where we
20 don't fear for their safety. And this is all due
21 to the fact of the increased flows and
22 fluctuations of the water system. And these
23 conditions change not only within weeks, months,
24 they are sometimes in hours. And it's really
25 concerning to have this happen.

1 You know, like I said, there has been
2 loss of life, there has been people stranded in
3 their boat overnight in the treacherous
4 conditions. There has been people hitting reefs.
5 You know, those are the things that, you know, are
6 all due to the fluctuations in water. We can tell
7 you that the experienced boaters are even having
8 trouble monitoring and keeping track of where
9 everything is currently in the system. And you
10 know, like I said, being on council you receive
11 those calls firsthand. You get calls sometimes at
12 11:00 at night saying these people haven't
13 returned from their hunting trip and, you know, we
14 have to deploy our search and rescue team to go
15 and look for these people and make sure they're
16 okay.

17 So I guess the recommendation would be
18 to have Manitoba Hydro, in the summer, mark the
19 reefs that are within the water systems,
20 especially in the York Factory area, so that we
21 don't have any deaths, near deaths, or any
22 incidents where they're not able to get back to
23 the community.

24 And as for the winter, I think Donna
25 mentioned that we have to keep reiterating that we

1 need the fluctuations to decrease while we're in
2 the ice season for us. And we take our families
3 across that channel, we take our elders, you know,
4 our most precious loved ones across that system,
5 and it's very concerning. There is water on the
6 ice, sometimes there is slush, you know, and it's
7 a serious -- it's a serious issue. It's dangerous
8 conditions and, you know, you fear the loss of
9 life a lot of the times.

10 Another thing, second point would be
11 the water treatment facility. In the past, I'm
12 going to say three years that I have been around,
13 I have been around for going on my fourth year
14 now, I've noticed the increase in the turbidity
15 levels. One morning we did a test on the
16 turbidity -- we had a reading of 2 the day before,
17 the next day was 600, so 2 to 600 in one day is
18 really concerning. Our water treatment plant
19 facility is unable to accommodate or keep up with
20 the turbidity fluctuations that are going through.
21 The only other First Nation that I know of that
22 has insane flux abilities like that is Black
23 River. And Black River is called Black River for
24 a reason, and it's a black river, you know.

25 So we're in the process right now of

1 getting an upgrade in our facility. I don't want
2 to tell you guys that, but I want to make it sound
3 as bad as I can.

4 So like I said, we are having to
5 increase the chemical loads in all of the
6 processing. And there's is a quote that really --
7 not a quote, but a statement made by one of our
8 Health staff that's really concerning to me. So,
9 this was made by one of our, I guess local staff
10 that's been here for, I'm going to say ten years
11 now. He mentions that there is some people in the
12 community that have been diagnosed with H pylori,
13 and he said to the members, he said to this lady
14 at the Health station, he said, I wouldn't be
15 surprised if the whole community has H pylori, I
16 would not be surprised. And H pylori, if you look
17 it up, it creates ulcers in your stomach, and
18 long-term effects are cancer, stomach cancer. So
19 if you read up on it, it will tell you exactly
20 what it does. It usually occurs in young children
21 first and progresses as you get older. To have
22 that coming from a health staff, you know, is
23 really concerning. Like I said, cancer, it will
24 lead to cancer later in life.

25 And Manitoba Hydro being I guess the

1 number one contributor of that fluctuation and
2 that turbidity, they should be, their head should
3 be on, you know -- sorry, I'm just reading my
4 notes here. So H pylori, that's the biggest one.
5 And there is also, Health Canada issued us a water
6 quality advisory this year, and in the past there
7 has been a few boil water advisories. So right
8 there is the -- that's one of the effects of
9 Hydro.

10 And one thing I wanted share too, this
11 is my last story, Councillor George mentioned the
12 seagulls and how they're being affected. I took a
13 tour of the Keeyask project with Chief Bland and a
14 few other council members, and I was really
15 baffled to see I guess where they re-nested the
16 seagulls. And when I was there I thought it was a
17 joke, I thought it was just, like this is not
18 real, this is, you know, the seagulls were put on
19 a sea can -- so I'm going to give you a little bit
20 of a picture -- so they're put on a red sea can
21 and the top was a layer of rocks and seagull
22 decoys. And they're asking for opinions on what
23 do you guys think of this? Do you think the
24 seagulls will be attracted to this?

25 And when I was a young boy, a young

1 man, my grandfather always told me when I went
2 hunting, don't wear red, don't wear red, you will
3 scare the geese away, and that's one thing that
4 popped in my head. Okay. So a bird is scared of
5 red. Red sea can sitting on the site, and you
6 wonder why the seagulls are not resting on those.
7 And they've got these falcons chasing them around,
8 trying to scare them away, trying to lure them to
9 what I think is an unnatural nesting area. It was
10 really -- like I said, I thought it was just a
11 joke. And what do you think of this? What do you
12 think? Do you think the seagulls will like this?
13 I'm not a seagull, but I don't like that, you know
14 what I mean. It's, you know -- we can -- I think
15 I remember my grandfather eating seagull eggs when
16 I was a kid. I was allergic to eggs so I couldn't
17 eat them, but I do remember my grandfather
18 grabbing seagull eggs and taking them home.

19 So those are a few of things, like I
20 said, we have. We can sit here for two or three
21 days and talk about all the effects, but a lot of
22 them are on record already. But I just want to
23 say thank you for coming and listening. Thank
24 you.

25 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi, Councillor

1 Leroy Constant. Anybody else before I take the
2 floor? Oh, Silas Riley.

3 SILAS RILEY: Just a couple of things
4 I wanted to mention. Yeah, and the slush, it gets
5 pretty bad in the winter. You can actually see it
6 along the shorelines when you fly in, you can see
7 the slush building up along the shorelines. And
8 also the algae, it's actually visible from the air
9 too. If you look, when you fly in, in the
10 summertime, you can see the Landing River and the
11 Akin River, they're much clearer, pouring into
12 this big green, blueish, ugly water that is Split
13 Lake. And the causeway, when you fly in too you
14 can see the difference between the water in Split
15 Lake and the water coming out of Landing River,
16 you can see it's much clearer. So the changes in
17 the water are visible from the air.

18 And we used to have a commercial
19 fishery here. There is no more commercial
20 fishery, no more commercial fishermen.

21 And I just wanted to ask a couple of
22 questions too. I know you guys don't have
23 answers, but I just wanted to raise this. Like I
24 remember in the early '90s and late '80s, all of
25 the talk was the about the mercury levels in Split

1 Lake here. I remember they did some tests. And I
2 just wanted to know if the mercury levels are
3 still high, and will they get higher? I know you
4 guys don't have answers for that, but that's all I
5 wanted to ask.

6 And thank you for coming to our
7 community. Thank you for listening.

8 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi. Next we have
9 Nellie Redhead.

10 NELLIE REDHEAD: Like Flora said,
11 where do I start, and Jeff said, everything is
12 just a memory. I can sit here and talk about what
13 I seen growing up. But I didn't grow up in York
14 Landing, I grew up in Tataskweyak, Split Lake. I
15 lived there for 30 years, and I've been living in
16 York Landing going on to 30 years. Now you know
17 how old I am.

18 It's pretty hard to put into words how
19 all this affects me spiritually inside, inside my
20 heart. Like one of the memories I have, going out
21 on a canoe with my grandparents, going to go pick
22 cloudberries, and my grandfather driving his six
23 horsepower motor while my grandmother tells him to
24 stop so she can shoot at ducks. That's one of the
25 memories that I have.

1 Nowadays you don't see any elderly
2 people out there. Even for myself, going out on a
3 boat, I'm screaming my head off trying to get off
4 the boat. I'm either trying to step over the
5 debris that's there on the shoreline or my boots
6 are getting stuck in the mud. And then trying to
7 pull out your boat on the shoreline, your paddles
8 are getting stuck in the mud. So those things we
9 have to go through now.

10 Like this morning I was asking, like
11 what more can you say and who is going to listen?
12 And I was talking to my son this morning, I was
13 telling him about this meeting. I guess that was
14 the same feeling, his thoughts, I said -- he said
15 nothing is ever going to change, what Manitoba
16 Hydro has done is going to be there. It affects
17 the self-esteem of a person.

18 I'm thinking about the employment that
19 Manitoba Hydro had promised our people, and the
20 way they're being treated once they go out to
21 work, especially the younger generation. They
22 come home after being let go from their job for
23 whatever reason, and you know, it affects their
24 self-esteem, they don't feel very good. And
25 that's the way it has been, for myself that's what

1 I feel.

2 But at times, you know, I still can
3 see the beauty of the land, you know, being out
4 there is peaceful, but it was way more beautiful
5 before. It's not the same.

6 When they talk about the algae, I took
7 my granddaughter down to the lake one time, she
8 sees that blue algae that they're talking about,
9 and she asked, is the earth dying? Like what do
10 you say to a child that asks you that kind of
11 question? So it does -- this is where I wanted to
12 come from, just how it affects me emotionally,
13 what I see is happening to our lakes, our land,
14 shorelines. Egosi.

15 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi. Nellie
16 Redhead, that's my better half.

17 Okay. So, I have a few words to say
18 too as a member of York Factory First Nation. I
19 have lived here for a good part of my life. I
20 have been out to residential school for 12 years
21 of that, but I also have gone out to look for work
22 in other areas, in urban areas. I worked for Inco
23 and I worked for Canadian National Railways also.
24 But the rest of my life I have been here in York
25 Landing. It is home to me and it will be for the

1 rest of my life, I believe.

2 Reference was made to 300 islands in
3 the lake here earlier. But I guess I can note
4 that we're down to about 200 now, the rest have
5 become reefs. Because I do a lot of riding around
6 on the lake too, and I've taken some pictures over
7 the years, and I've tried to take notice and take
8 pictures of what are islands -- what were islands
9 and the changes that are happening to them over
10 the years. And I still have those pictures and I
11 will still continue to take pictures of the same
12 islands. And I notice the changes in those.

13 There used to be this one island at
14 the turnoff over here, and for the longest time it
15 had this one long tall tree on it, it was dying,
16 it was a dead tree, and it was very tall. It was
17 an island that had a lot of bush and willows on it
18 and then a few trees, but there was this one tall
19 tree. And even that now, it's mainly just small
20 willows now, and that tall tree is gone now, it
21 has fallen down. So that's one of the things that
22 continue to happen to the islands.

23 But anyways back in 2014, on July 2nd,
24 Minister Struthers, who was the Minister
25 responsible for Manitoba Hydro, issued a press

1 release. It was a report on future development
2 activities, more so with what was happening with
3 Conawapa at the time. And I guess -- but there
4 was a recommendation to stop all activities on
5 Conawapa at that time. And one of the things, and
6 I want to add emphasis to this, is that in the
7 press release it is stated that:

8 "In the meantime, we believe that
9 important work with Manitoba Hydro's
10 First Nations partners should
11 continue, including activities
12 consistent with the Clean Environment
13 Commission's emphasis on the
14 importance of attaining the highest
15 standard of environmental stewardship
16 and reconciliation of Aboriginal
17 peoples."

18 That was in 2014. But when we talk
19 about reconciliation, and in particular when the
20 governments say it, we still don't know what
21 direction that's going to take. And we still
22 don't know how they're going to approach
23 reconciliation and what they're going to do. They
24 talk, they talk very highly of it, but what are
25 they going to do? Apologize? I'm not too sure.

1 One of the things that Manitoba Hydro
2 also did was to write up a summary, a summary on
3 our behalf for York Factory First Nation. And I
4 think, I'm not too sure if it's out there, but
5 they did write a summary, and we did have a copy
6 of it, they gave us a copy of it. And we read it
7 through. Some of our members read through it.
8 But I for one very strongly object to having
9 Manitoba Hydro do a summary on our behalf. And I
10 think it's stated in our commentary also that it
11 not be submitted. In that summary, that draft
12 summary I will say, they said -- they purport to
13 provide information. The document is not an
14 appropriate account on the perspectives,
15 experiences, and concerns of York Factory First
16 Nation. It was to be their view, not ours. But I
17 feel that it's something that they have been
18 accustomed to doing. They seem to think that they
19 know what is best for us. They write like they
20 know who we are, how we think, how we feel. And
21 they think that, you guys keep quiet, we'll do
22 what's best for you, York Factory First Nation.
23 But they have not lived up to their obligations
24 and promises as stated on any of the past
25 agreements.

1 Here again they go along with the
2 adage that promises are made to be broken. We
3 have made so many releases to Manitoba Hydro, you
4 know, exchanging when we were talking in
5 discussions before we come to an agreement on the
6 agreements, we exchanged -- well, we don't really
7 negotiate, there is some back and forth, some
8 discussion, and we exchange. And that's one of
9 the things they always put in their agreements is
10 the release, to provide these releases. And over
11 the years we have provided so many releases to
12 Manitoba Hydro for them to give this and that,
13 very little. We have to give them releases, and
14 this still happens today, they still do that to us
15 today, they still want releases. We release them
16 of everything, of every obligation it seems like.
17 They want this and that. In order for you to have
18 this agreement, to come to this agreement, you
19 release us of this, you release us of whatever it
20 is they want. And either that, take it or leave
21 it. If you don't take this, it's not going to
22 happen, you're not going to get what you want. We
23 are still going to go ahead and do what we want,
24 but you're not going to get what you want.

25 So that's another concern that I have

1 is that we give them so many releases. And like I
2 say, it still happens today, it's happening this
3 week in discussions with Hydro. They still want
4 us to release what it is they want, you know.
5 It's always to the benefit of Manitoba Hydro.

6 We are the ones who see and feel the
7 damages, the impacts of Manitoba Hydro, hydro
8 development. We have, in past agreements we have
9 been provided some monies, and they have turned
10 around and we have to pay for what is required to
11 be remediated. In our adverse effects
12 agreement -- yeah, the adverse effects agreement,
13 they gave us money in the adverse effects
14 agreement. But these are concerns that we state,
15 but they say, you can have this money but you use
16 that money to remediate whatever it is you want.
17 That's how they do it. They don't give us money
18 that we can use freely and how we want to do it.
19 We have to spend a good portion of that money that
20 we get from Manitoba Hydro on remediating whatever
21 is happening to us and the environment around us.
22 That is what we live with.

23 When you go in the reserve, we try and
24 do our best to make our homes and our community
25 look good, but it's really difficult with what we

1 have, with what we get from the government and
2 with what we can get from partnerships. But
3 that's -- I mean joint partnerships or
4 partnerships.

5 But that's my next point also is that
6 we have gone into this new era of partnership. I
7 am of the view that it's just another way of
8 getting what the government wants, what Manitoba
9 Hydro wants. We'll use them to get what we want,
10 that's how I feel. Like I have been involved in
11 this, in these processes so long, that's how I
12 come to view it, like that mistrust and disrespect
13 has been there and it's still there. It lingers
14 every time, nearly every time we have a discussion
15 with them.

16 One of the things that they're doing
17 at Keeyask right now is they have what is called a
18 respect campaign, but that stems from all of the
19 racism that is happening in Keeyask. There is a
20 lot of workers there that come from the Aboriginal
21 communities, our First Nations here, and
22 Manitobans, a lot of Manitobans out in the
23 country, so there is a lot of employees there.
24 And with it there comes many issues. And one of
25 them is racism, discrimination, harassment, you

1 know, things like that.

2 And they have this respect campaign.

3 But it's one word, it's one word on a T-shirt, or
4 one word on a mural or on a wall. And they -- I
5 guess it's just one step towards trying to address
6 the issue of discrimination and racism. But I was
7 there recently and I was looking at that word
8 respect, but that means a lot of things, it
9 doesn't mean it's addressing racism. For me I
10 saw, all of these years that I have been working
11 for the First Nation and having to deal with the
12 Manitoba Hydro, and all of the disrespect and the
13 mistrust that we have had with Manitoba Hydro, it
14 just brought a whole different meaning to it
15 rather than what they're trying to address there.
16 I think for the First Nation people it would mean
17 a different thing too, other than what -- other
18 than an Aboriginal family, it would create a whole
19 different dynamic there, I guess, at the camp
20 site, at camp life.

21 One of the things that is spoken to
22 and said -- well, spoken to by our people and
23 said, written in the document is traditional
24 knowledge. In spite of it being traditional
25 knowledge, it continues to be viewed with

1 scepticism and it's considered a second tier of
2 knowledge, it's below science. It's not equal to
3 western science. A lot of people look at it as
4 something entirely -- especially when you look at
5 it from our view as a First Nation people, because
6 it involves everything, it involves spirit. So
7 western science, when you look at it from a
8 western science view there is -- only living
9 things may have the spirit, but to us all things
10 have spirit. But in dealing with Manitoba Hydro,
11 they still look at it like western science is the
12 number one thing, traditional knowledge is second
13 tier, and they don't know what to do with it.
14 They don't know how to give it equal weight to
15 western science. We know we can from our view.
16 But it's just not accepted and it's viewed with
17 scepticism, like I say. There is a willingness to
18 accept the value of ATK, but it seems that there
19 is a refusal to accept the worthiness, the
20 worthiness of our elders, the worthiness of all
21 the things that have been passed on to us from
22 ages ago.

23 I find it perplexing, or more annoying
24 I guess, troublesome, that we have to explain how
25 our ways, our ways of living, our ways of knowing

1 are different from science which Manitoba Hydro
2 depends on and uses, while science needs no
3 justification in order to conduct research.

4 We have sat at tables of Manitoba
5 Hydro and asked them if we can do, if we can
6 conduct research our way. And they would say, but
7 that's not how you do it the western science way.
8 And now they want us to do what we want to do in
9 the western science way, take our traditional
10 knowledge and use it some way to do it in the
11 western science way. And that's troublesome.
12 It's already science to us. Our knowledge and our
13 ways of life is science, it's what we lived with
14 for -- and it is what we know.

15 We have extreme -- we have experienced
16 both extreme low and high water levels within the
17 last few years. And I for one feel that it's
18 going to continue to happen with Split Lake being
19 used as a reservoir, I think that's the word for
20 it, where they dump water from the CRD and Lake
21 Winnipeg Regulation. And all of the water flows
22 into Split Lake and it's stored here, water levels
23 go up and down. And it's going to get worse, it's
24 going to continue to get worse. Our children, our
25 grandchildren will never know and experience what

1 we've already seen in the past, like what the
2 members are speaking here, good water, how you go
3 about living day-to-day.

4 And even now it's different from what
5 it was 50 years ago. And when you look down the
6 road about 50 years ago, with our grandchildren
7 and great grandchildren, they're not going to know
8 what was there, they're not going to feel what was
9 there. I guess we can do what we can, like what
10 we have always, what our ancestors, my great
11 grandfathers, great grandparents have always done
12 is teach us orally, and that's what we will
13 continue to do into the future I guess, and do
14 what we can to tell them our stories.

15 Another thing I just wanted to add
16 here is that I recently came across this email
17 that was written just recently. And it's a
18 description of the Augmented Flow Program.

19 "After construction of the CRD was
20 complete, initial operations in 1977
21 revealed that impacts downstream of
22 Notigi during open water conditions
23 were similar to expected and during
24 winter conditions ice impacts were
25 much less than expected. This lead to

1 a decision to explore higher Diversion
2 flows. In 1978 Manitoba Hydro
3 requested approval to test the
4 Diversion capacity for a wider range
5 of flows that was set out in the Water
6 Power Act licence. After a multi-year
7 testing phase, approval to deviate
8 from the terms of the Water Power Act
9 licence had been the same for each
10 winter and summer period since 1986.
11 This mode of operation has become
12 known as the Augmented Flow Program
13 and continues to the present day under
14 an annual continuance of the interim
15 licence."

16 So decisions and work were happening
17 out of our control, and those decisions continue
18 to affect us. We are the ones who see and feel
19 the full extent of the impacts of Hydro
20 development. We do not see it as green clean
21 energy that Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Government
22 put out to the greater public. Egosi.

23 Okay. Now I will go back to my
24 chairperson capacity. Is there anybody else?
25 Okay, Elder Elizabeth Beardy.

1 ELIZABETH BEARDY: Good afternoon, my
2 name is Elizabeth Beardy. I would like to thank
3 the commission for coming to listen to our
4 problems here.

5 I lived here for 60 years and I'm a
6 residential school survivor. I went to Brandon
7 residential school in 1956. I was 13 years old.
8 And I lived here for 60 years. That's my age
9 there. Figure it out.

10 I've worked for -- as a CA chart for
11 25 years, I just retired in 2015. I used to work
12 with Stella Chapman at the nursing station here.
13 And I came here in 1957 from Brandon. We lived in
14 a tent. She was looking after my sister here,
15 Marion. I stayed with her till my mom and dad
16 came in late from York Factory. And I have a
17 brother that was born there in 1957. Frank, he
18 was the last baby to be born there.

19 And while I was with CA chart, I did
20 the mercury testing in the '70s, and we had quite
21 a few that were high on mercury.

22 We used to live off the land. Now I
23 don't see that here. I see a lot of changes. We
24 used to go pick medicine, berries, or whatever.
25 We had a lot of hardship. I've seen the effects

1 of what Hydro is doing to our land, I've seen it
2 all. And I was listening to the speakers. Every
3 one of them are so true. They seen it all too.

4 I'd like to see for the future, for
5 our kids, our grandchildren, I would like to see a
6 swimming pool here so that they don't have to swim
7 in the dirty water in the summertime. And I would
8 like to see free hydro. I've been asking for that
9 but they never -- and we have to go really far to
10 go -- for men, the harvesters I'm talking about,
11 they go hunting in York Factory and Churchill
12 sometimes. And everything tastes different. It
13 used to be good in York Factory. All that is
14 gone. Like living off the land is what -- my
15 beautiful memory. I try to teach my
16 grandchildren, my sons and my daughters, like what
17 we went through, like fishing, hunting, sewing and
18 everything, cooking and everything, wild food and
19 that, and I still teach that to them. I think
20 that's all I have to say. Also the high cost of
21 living, that's what I meant to talk about too.
22 That's it. Thank you for listening.

23 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi. That was
24 Elizabeth Beardy. There is nobody else from the
25 community? Jim Thomas wants to say a few words to

1 address the community and the CEC panel. Jim

2 Thomas, he works for ---

3 JIM THOMAS: Thank you, Wayne. Thank
4 you for the opportunity to speak and for the
5 chance to come here and have a chance to listen to
6 people talk again. As Wayne said, my name is Jim
7 Thomas, I'm a senior advisor to HTFC planning and
8 design. HTFC has been working with York Factory
9 for many years, helping the community with respect
10 to Manitoba Hydro development and environmental
11 assessment and mitigation and monitoring, et
12 cetera. And I personally have had the honour to
13 have had a relationship with this community and
14 some of the people in this room going back 35
15 years, which scares the heck out of me.

16 One of the things that is said in York
17 Factory's submission and I think that people --
18 I'm kind of surprised that nobody said it today,
19 but they've said it at other times -- is York
20 Factory members, including people in this room,
21 have been -- we'll say that they've talked to the
22 CEC panels before, they've talked to government
23 about cumulative effects for years. And what so
24 impresses me is still they will show up and tell
25 you again. And that I find amazing, because I

1 think other people would you have given up. I

2 think other communities have perhaps given up.

3 And so this is really, I'm really
4 quite taken aback about the fact that they will
5 still show up and they put in the effort and put
6 in the working groups and put together, and give
7 you their message. Because they will tell you as
8 well that they sometimes think it isn't being
9 heard.

10 So I wanted to say to you, the panel,
11 that you have a really important job. Because
12 when this, when the government announced that it
13 was going to respond to the recommendations of two
14 earlier panels to do this work, York Factory
15 thought it was very important and it was about
16 time that it be done. And they believe very
17 strongly in the importance of this work. And as
18 you will read in their submission, you probably
19 read in their submission and the submission of
20 others, is that York Factory thinks there is some
21 serious shortcomings in this cumulative effects
22 assessment.

23 And I'm not going to talk about all of
24 those here, because I know people want to have
25 supper and then go home. But what I did want to

1 say is a couple of things.

2 One is that the most important thing
3 you have to do is to figure out that way to compel
4 Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba, and indeed as said in
5 the submission, Canada, to take further action to
6 deal with the shortcomings in the cumulative
7 effects assessment, but also to do those things
8 that assessments are supposed to do, which is
9 identify what to do about it and then to do
10 something about it.

11 And the other -- and there are two
12 recommendations and some recommendations for next
13 steps in the document, which essentially say that
14 is to figure out a way to make these commitments
15 to occur, and then to compel a process of
16 reconciliation and environmental stewardship, and
17 put some meat on those bones. As Wayne said,
18 there is statements that have been made by
19 Ministers of the Crown, there are statements that
20 were made just as recently as this week by Federal
21 Ministers towards reconciliation and environmental
22 stewardship, and the kind of commitments that have
23 been made at the Provincial level by the Crown as
24 well that need to be put into action, meaningful
25 action.

1 And it has to be collaborative with
2 York Factory and its neighbours and its brothers
3 and sisters along the Nelson River. And that,
4 therefore, I would urge you to think about, and
5 reread the York Factory submission to think about
6 what people told you today, to take a step back
7 and look at that big picture which York Factory
8 talks about in its submission. Because it's
9 really easy to get bogged down in the technical
10 details. It's an overwhelming task to think about
11 the regional cumulative effects of hydroelectric
12 development in combination with all of the other
13 developments and things that have occurred that
14 are discussed and described by York Factory in
15 this document.

16 So when you're feeling overwhelmed, I
17 think it's useful to step back and have a look at
18 that big picture that's described, and those big
19 issues which talk about the disparity, the basic,
20 the fundamental injustice that continues to exist
21 in Northern Manitoba. The huge incredible
22 benefits that hydroelectric development has
23 brought to Manitobans and Canadians with respect
24 to not just financial benefits, wealth and cheap
25 power, but also in satisfying commitments to the

1 world with respect to clean energy, and addressing
2 greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. And
3 this community and others have taken on it on the
4 chin and in the stomach, and have been beaten up
5 badly, and continue to be taking a great deal of
6 impact for the greater good. And I think that
7 that is one of the fundamental injustices that
8 need to be recognized with respect to cumulative
9 effects. And that's where action needs to be
10 taken to develop a future which is more just and
11 more sustainable. Thank you.

12 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi, Jim Thomas. A
13 round of applause, please? (Applause).

14 Okay. Egosi, Jim Thomas. Anybody
15 else before we go into the closing segment of our
16 agenda for today?

17 Okay.

18 OBAIDIAH WASTESICOOT: (Native
19 language spoken). Conawapa, I don't want to see
20 that built -- we have told Manitoba Hydro not to
21 bother building that. There is enough damage
22 already on that river. I seen it a couple of
23 years ago, I went, we went down there by boat.
24 The water is about five or six feet higher than it
25 used to be, and one of the islands are gone

1 already. They don't -- there is no island in
2 there that used to be there. And I don't want to
3 see -- I don't want Manitoba Hydro to think about
4 building Conawapa, because there is enough damage
5 already in this Nelson River -- see what they will
6 have to say. If you let them come and say
7 anything about that, tell them to come and see me.

8 WAYNE REDHEAD: Okay, Obaidiah.
9 Closing comments? Stanley Spence.

10 STANLEY SPENCE: My name is Stanley
11 Spence, I'm a York Factory band member. And like
12 all of the other comments about the past, I seen
13 the changes and I don't want to see anymore
14 changes but for the good. Like the changes to
15 waterways, like I've come accustomed to traveling
16 at night during the summer, and I knew every
17 island, I could drive with my eyes closed. But
18 now I don't do that because of the water levels,
19 there is reefs there that weren't there before.
20 And I never take my grandchildren out there, and
21 the only time I take them out there is during the
22 daytime where I can see. I don't want to risk
23 their lives. And they're the ones that are
24 suffering or going to be suffering, because they
25 won't be able to see that, what I saw. And I

1 would really like to see an all-weather road go
2 through there. I don't mind driving an extra 40
3 minutes or whatever it takes, but I don't want to
4 see my grandchildren drown in the river, because I
5 travel with them all of the time to and fro across
6 this river. So they're the ones that are going to
7 be suffering if I don't teach them.

8 Like I do a lot of fishing too, or I
9 used to, and I don't do that anymore because of
10 the damage that Hydro has done to my fish nets and
11 that. I can't -- I got used to calling the logs
12 that I catch hydro fish, I don't call them
13 sturgeon, I don't call them jack fish, I call them
14 hydro fish, that's the logs. So I give up on
15 that, and my grandchildren suffer because I can't
16 teach them that, I don't want to do that anymore,
17 I don't want to catch logs no more. And I think
18 that's all I want to say. I'm getting kind of
19 nervous there. Thank you.

20 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi, Stanley Spence.
21 So we'll move into the next agenda item. We'll
22 have the closing comments from the CEC panel.

23 THE CHAIRMAN: Well, this has been
24 very moving and a real learning experience for
25 myself. And I'll let the other panelists say a

1 word or two as well about that.

2 So I want to thank you for sharing
3 ideas that I know for some of you these memories
4 and thoughts are not easy to talk about, but
5 they're very helpful to us, will assist us in
6 doing what I hope will be a good and useful report
7 and one where the recommendations will be
8 implemented. So I would like to thank you first
9 of all for inviting us, and secondly for sharing
10 some very heartfelt thoughts with us.

11 And I will ask if any of the panelists
12 want to add anything? Okay. Well, thank you very
13 much, and I will turn it back to Wayne.

14 COUNCILLOR CONSTANT: All right.
15 Thank you again CEC panel for coming to our
16 community. I would like to thank Jim Thomas for
17 stealing every word I had to say in closing. I
18 would like to acknowledge the community members
19 right now. We see the same community members come
20 out to all of our meetings, and it shows that they
21 truly care about our community in the present
22 state, as well as our future generations. And we
23 trust that the CEC panel has heard our concerns
24 and that you will take these concerns back and
25 have these addressed.

1 As Jimmy said, I've shared a quote
2 from Roddy, he doesn't want these to fall on deaf
3 ears. And we, for a number of years have, you
4 know, ultimately had to deal with that, and we
5 want something done. We can't keep suffering like
6 this. This is a daily occurrence to live here and
7 to worry about everyone. So we, like I said, we
8 hope you do your best to I guess put it on the
9 record for York Factory. And thank you again for
10 coming, and safe travels. Thank you.

11 WAYNE REDHEAD: Egosi, Leroy. A few
12 moments ago I was in the staff room there, and I
13 was looking around for styrofoam cups, we're out
14 of the styrofoam cups I said to Lorraine in there.
15 Good. But I said at the moment, damn, and I seen
16 this big hydro development structure in front of
17 me, that's what comes to mind when I said damn.

18 Okay. My closing comments, I would
19 like to thank everybody who has come to attend our
20 meeting here with CEC panel. I feel that it's
21 been a very worthwhile meeting with the panel here
22 today. There was a lot of emotion, a lot of
23 interesting perspectives and views, experiences
24 that people have gone through over these many
25 years living right in the midst of all of these

1 damns. I thank all of the elders that have come
2 to the meeting, and community members, fellow
3 community members, the CEC panel and their
4 assistants. Egosi.

5 And now, like Leroy was just saying,
6 damn, that Jim Thomas stole everything I was going
7 to say in my closing remarks. I was just going to
8 reiterate what Leroy was saying. I guess I'll say
9 it again.

10 Anyways, I hope that that the panel
11 will take due consideration of what we have
12 expressed here today in our commentary submission.
13 But we would also like to have our other, the
14 other -- the other books, I guess you can call
15 them books, the other studies that we have done
16 taken into consideration. Because those are work
17 that our community members have done, they put a
18 lot of hard work into those. I was going to
19 commend Jeff and the crew that did the work at the
20 time, but it all came from community members
21 input. And there was -- a lot of those books are
22 worthwhile reading, worthwhile -- they could be
23 number one booksellers if they were put out into
24 the open, into the open public.

25 But yeah, when you read through our

1 commentary, we have the executive summary in the
2 background information. I would like to have the
3 CEC panel to pay special attention to comments on
4 the scope of the RCEA, which has cumulative
5 effects in the RCEA and describing the legacy of
6 cumulative effects of Hydro development, the
7 language, water, caribou, traveling and
8 harvesting. We also want to see them take special
9 notice about next steps and the recommendations
10 that we put forward to CEC panel. There are two
11 key recommendations to address the cumulative
12 effects impacts that we have experienced.

13 We also want to see the next steps
14 being implemented. We have identified nine next
15 steps to be further development moving forward to
16 collaborate and address regional cumulative
17 effects. So I'm pretty sure that, and I hope that
18 you have read it.

19 So in conclusion, I give thanks to
20 each and every one of you, and that I hope that we
21 can all move forward and take another step, I hope
22 good steps anyways, in hydro development in our
23 area. I would like to see a better future for our
24 children and our grandchildren.

25 But I leave you with one quote: "I

1 look forward to remind us of your strength and
2 hold your medicine close." Those are good words,
3 and medicine can refer to anything that is good
4 for you, it can be humour, laughter, children,
5 anything that's good for you is your medicine, so
6 keep it close. And with that, supper is waiting,
7 and we'll get somebody to say a closing prayer.

8 One of the elders. Flora?

9 JOHNNY SAUNDERS: Sorry, I'll be
10 quick. I just want to tell a story about what
11 happened to me and a couple of hunting buddies. I
12 won't mention their names because, you know, I
13 just want to share this part because of, you know,
14 this has to do with, I guess with the waterways
15 around here and places that we travel. This fall
16 we were going hunting and we were going to go from
17 here towards Kelsey. Kelsey Generating Station is
18 upstream here from the lake and there's two
19 rapids. One of them, we just call it First
20 Rapids, it's the closest one, and then there is
21 another one on the west side. So we're going to
22 go for a ride and go hunting. And you know, we
23 were going there, and my partner was driving the
24 boat and we were sitting there, we had our, you
25 know, all of the equipment, you know, our guns and

1 stuff like that for going out and hunting.

2 When we were approaching the First
3 Rapids which is, you know, even at this time of
4 year the water is going through there pretty
5 quick. What had happened was that, you know, it
6 was raining pretty good and it was overcast, and
7 we ended up hitting a reef right in the rapids.
8 You know, we all went -- we basically went air
9 borne and we landed on this rock in the middle of
10 the river with very little, you know, there wasn't
11 any -- you know, it's pretty amazing that we
12 landed where we did and nowhere else, because if
13 we landed on either side or the front, the boat
14 would have been in the rapids and we probably
15 would have tipped over and stuff like that. But
16 we all got banged up pretty good from that. You
17 know, on one leg I had a bruise from my knee right
18 down to my ankle. I banged my head and it was
19 sore for over a week on that. But, you know, I
20 think we were very fortunate that it wasn't worse
21 than it was.

22 But it was, you know, thinking about
23 it now, we could have been all in the river and
24 that would have been it, you know.

25 So I guess we were fortunate that we

1 did survive that collision with a reef, especially
2 right there in the rapids because it was, I think
3 we were -- it must have took us 40, 45 minutes
4 after we got our senses back to push the boat and
5 motor back into the water and then make our way
6 back home.

7 So, I just wanted to -- I was kind of
8 reluctant to share that earlier, but I wanted the
9 panel to know, and actually the community members
10 to know that, you know, the stuff, you know,
11 traveling around in a boat is hazardous around
12 here on this lake. And I'm glad that my hunting
13 partners and I made it back home safely. I just
14 wanted to mention that.

15 (Closing prayer).

16 (Concluded at 5:50 p.m.)

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OFFICIAL EXAMINER'S CERTIFICATE

I, CECELIA J. REID, a duly appointed Official
Examiner in the Province of Manitoba, do hereby
certify the foregoing pages are a true and correct
transcript of my Stenotype notes, to the best of
my skill and ability, as taken by me at the time
and place hereinbefore stated.

Cecelia J. Reid
Official Examiner, Q.B.

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