

March 6, 2013

Mr. Terry Sargeant
Chair, Clean Environment Commission
305-155 Carlton St.
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3H8

Dear Mr. Sargeant,

RE: Bipole III Transmission Project – Bison Ranch Development (GHA19A)

The following information is being provided in response to the request for an undertaking regarding the location and other specifics relating to the bison ranch development in GHA 19A in proximity to the potential Bipole III routes in the area.

- Based on the best information currently available to Manitoba Hydro, a draft map is attached that plots the location of land parcels believed to be part of several bison ranch operations in GHA 19. The map was created using Crown land property information supplied by Ms. Dagdick of MCWS on February 13, 2013. The map was provided to the consultants for Pine Creek First Nation on February 27, 2013 via email. To come up with the land boundaries plotted on the attached map property ownership information from a Repro map (2011) was combined with the Crown land dataset. This is draft information based on the sources indicated and does not illustrate a fence line. Some of the land in question is presently fenced and it is conceivable that more of it may be fenced to create enclosures for bison. Bison ranch extent and location of fence-lines would have to be provided and verified by others. As such, this draft map is provided for discussion purposes only and to assist the CEC during the current hearing in understanding, based on the best information currently available to Manitoba Hydro, the proximity of the bison ranch operations to Bipole III routes in the GHA 19A area.

- The information provided here on the bison ranch developments has not been readily available and the first data on the potential overall extent was obtained in an email from Ms. Dagdick on February 13, 2013. While there was evidence of bison ranch activity in the area during the initial EIS work, including evidence of some fence development in the area based on observations, the extent and the overall development plan was not discernible even at the time of AFPR environmental assessment filed January 28, 2013.
- The presence of the bison ranch developments has been understood during the SSEA process to not be an impediment to transmission line routing. In fact, pasture environments such as the bison ranch developments are routing opportunities and considered compatible land use for a transmission line as there is negligible interference with the agricultural operation.
- The FPR routing in GHA 19A was reviewed again recently as it may be re-selected as the preferred route due to culture issues with the AFPR. Enhanced mitigation to prevent new access along the original FPR was discussed with EAB and Wildlife Branches in the event the FPR be selected for final routing. Additional mitigation measures would be considered in the area to prevent hunting access to an 8 km stretch along the FPR (outside the known bison ranch area) where there is currently limited or no access. Manitoba Hydro has indicated the type and extent of potential measures in a letter to Ms. Dagdick on February 23, 2013.

Should you have any questions or require further information please contact me at (204) 360-4394.

Regards,

Shannon Johnson
Manager Licensing and Environmental Assessment Department
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Winnipeg, Manitoba
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sj/tj