


Presentation to the Clean Environment Commission Panel
Charged with the Review of the Bipole III Transmission Project
By Paul Rempel
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(Commission Secretary)

Good evening Panel members, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Paul Rempel. I farm in a community that is situated 29 km south of the south Perimeter of Winnipeg on Provincial Road 330 at a small Hamlet called Osborne. We farm a variety of crops including wheat, canola, oats, soybeans, sunflowers and grasses. I would like to speak this evening as a landowner, who lives along the chosen route for Bipole III but more importantly I speak as a citizen of this province.

The Clean Environment Commission hearings for the Bipole III project started on October 1. The transcripts of this hearing record that, in the last four weeks, you have heard opening statements from the proponent, Manitoba Hydro, as well as from the Nine Participants in the hearing. You have heard in great detail, description of how Manitoba Hydro arrived at the final proposed route for Bipole III. You have heard testimony from experts both from within Manitoba Hydro and from outside the crown corporation explaining how they arrived at certain decisions when planning for the proposed Bipole III Project. The Panel has travelled across Manitoba in the past three weeks and stopped in key rural towns and cities to give the public their chance to be heard. Your efforts to seek input are appreciated. Some of the things that I say tonight, I wish the Commission to not take personally, but I feel they need to be said. Firstly, when I sat down you make me take an oath that I would not mislead the Commission, and you said that Manitoba Hydro had taken that same oath! How can Manitoba Hydro vow that they are not misleading the Commission when it was Hydro who firstly chose an east side route because it was more cost effective and of course made much more sense because of the shorter distance, by almost 50%!

At every stop along the way, the Panel and the Proponent have made it clear that the decision to take the far west side route for Bipole III was not their decision. It was what you have called a "policy" decision made back in

September of 2007 by the Government. According to the transcript, Manitoba Hydro even had the audacity to call it an “electoral” decision.

Your mandate includes reviewing the project as it is presented in the Environmental Impact Statement that Manitoba Hydro has prepared for the Bipole III project. It includes listening to all of the concerns you will hear during the Commission’s hearing process. It includes analyzing all that you hear and coming up with a report to the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship that will recommend the project be granted a license to proceed as it is presented, or perhaps it will recommend a license be issued with certain changes the Panel may recommend. Or maybe it will recommend the project not proceed at all.

To the members of this Panel, I say that there is a heavy onus on you to recognize that your decisions will affect all Manitobans. To be sure, it will affect landowners, not only those of us who are stewards of the land today but also our children and our grandchildren and generations beyond. But it will also affect every Manitoban.

Governments come and governments go. Even the leadership of Manitoba Hydro changes with time. Today’s leaders are not the ones directly affected by this line. Not today and not even in the future. It is the citizens of this province who will be affected either directly or indirectly.

The present routing of the line was the brainchild of former Premier Gary Doer. Where is he now? Ms. Rosann Wowchuk was a champion of the west- side decision. Where is she today? Mr. Vic Schroeder and Mr. Bob Brennan were quite happy to support and even implement the Government’s decision. Where are they now? Almost all those who make the decision to accept Mr. Doer’s request back in 2007 are long gone. Either that or they are hiding behind simple statements that can no longer be defended. Mostly, they are gone and so is the export market which Manitobans were assured would pay for the project. The current and former leaders are not impacted by this line, but the landowners who will have to live with it, and all citizens that will be forced to pay for it are.

I understand that the environmental review process must remain at arm's length from the Government. Still, I believe that it is not fair that the people who are forcing this decision on all Manitobans should be isolated from the feelings of the people of this province who are so concerned with the routing of the line. Why should the Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship, Mr. Gord MacIntosh, who will make the decision whether or not to license this project not have to witness and experience the anger being expressed at these hearings? Why should the Minister for Manitoba Hydro, Mr. David Chomiak, be shielded from the tearful presentations you have heard? Why does the new CEO for Manitoba Hydro, Mr. Scott Thompson, sit in his office a few blocks away from these hearings never to hear the voice of First Nations Manitobans saying that they don't trust Manitoba Hydro anymore? Why should he not hear that landowners whose property will be bisected by this line tell this Panel that Hydro is a corporate bully. Where is the Premier of Manitoba, Mr. Greg Selinger, who announced the "policy decision" in 2007 that is causing this line to be routed on the west side of the province? Manitobans want an explanation for this decision that makes sense. So far, they have not received it.

The Panel and the Commission need to do the right thing and stop this line from trampling on the rights of landowners and the interests of all Manitobans. Do it for future generations of Manitobans. Entrusted with probably the most important decision the Commission has ever been asked to make, it is your duty as citizens of this province. I'm asking you to please stop this line from running through the places where we farm and where we live. Thank you.

To Manitoba Hydro, our family farm will not put a signature on any proposal that is presented to us, until common sense starts to prevail!