

My name is Heidi Wiens. I am proud to be a member of a Manitoba farm family. In 1956 my grandparents purchased the farm and surrounding land where my family still farms today. They raised 5 children on this farm and all 11 of their grandchildren have been blessed with many special memories from the farm. I was devastated when I learned that Bipole 3 was to cross our family's farmland.

I am concerned for the safety of my family. My parents and my brother and his family will be living practically right under the transmission lines. ~~Do not patronize me and tell me that there are no known~~ health risks living under transmission lines. Researchers have already made the link between major health issues such as various cancers, skin growths, sleep and daily rhythm disturbances, depression, birth defects, and even suicide to exposure to electromagnetic fields (Wagner 2006, from RETA website). I want assurance that 10 years, 20 years, and 100 and more years from now there will be no dire and irreversible health effects discovered from living near or under these monstrous transmission lines. ~~MB Hydro~~ cannot give me this assurance; ~~they~~ are willing to put the lives of many, many Manitobans at risk for this project.

My family and I will also have the hazard of forever maneuvering large farm equipment around the bases of these gigantic structures. It is already a daily stress for us, as we maneuver around a transmission line built in the 1960s that runs diagonally across some of our best fields. It is very difficult to even imagine having a second and exponentially larger transmission line on these fields. Our safety will be compromised yet again as we struggle to work larger machines around monstrous structures built on our fields against our objections.

I am also concerned about the loss of productive agricultural land. In a world of hungry people, including many Manitobans who go hungry every night, it is ~~outrageous~~ to think that productive, valuable farmland is to be used up for this project. Farmers feed the world; they feed every person in this room. The Bipole 3 project will cross over and eat up some of the most valuable farmland in Manitoba; farmland that will be irreversibly destroyed and no longer be able to produce crops each year to feed a growing and hungry population.

The compensation package that has been offered is completely inadequate. There is NO price that can be put on the health and safety of my family and

the preservation of valuable, productive farmland. Nonetheless, a compensation package with a one-time payment has been offered to farmers, which, frankly, is so insufficient it is difficult to talk about. How can farmers even consider such a deal? The effects for them last not only for the rest of their careers, but for all generations to come. These farmers will forever have lost out on valuable acres to seed, they will forever be working machines around these monstrous structures, and the value of their property and farmland will forever be diminished.

Nonetheless, the message from the government and Hydro is that they must sign or their land will be expropriated. I looked up synonyms for expropriate as I was working on this presentation and the following words came up: to take, steal, pocket, nick, filch, walk off with, and confiscate. Hmm... I then looked up synonyms for bully and these words came up: to intimidate, terrorize, persecute, torment, and frighten.

**Do NOT bully farmers and landowners to sign over their land for this project.** I am not sure how much clearer we all can be with our message: This is our farmland. We put sweat, tears, and long, long hours into our work every year to feed you. We want to continue to farm, we want to pass our farms down to the next generation, and we need to do so without our health and safety being seriously compromised.

The health and safety of myself, my family, and the community I live in is at risk should this Bipole 3 project proceed on its proposed route. The Bipole 3 project cuts through some of the most densely populated areas of this province. This places the health of many Manitobans at risk who have yet to even learn what their government and Hydro are planning to do within mere miles or even less of their communities and homes. The beautiful Manitoban landscape that makes me proud to say I'm a prairie girl will be gone. My confidence in government and Manitoba Hydro to protect and care for Manitobans and our precious environment has been shattered.

In closing, I would like to quote a Kenyan proverb that says, "Treat the earth well. It wasn't given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children."

We all need to do our part to live up to this proverb. Farmers have been living this everyday. Now it is up to government and corporate officials who have the power to make and overturn decisions with dire environmental consequences to do their part.