

First of all, thank you for giving us a chance to speak today. We've actively opposed Bipole III West side for several years already, which indicates how seriously we take this matter. Many a tear has been shed and precious hours of sleep have been lost over this. A few years ago, an oil pump station was built about half a mile from our home. We had our reservations, but didn't see it as too big of a threat. However, the pumps are running often, and are noisy. If I had to imagine the noisy, huge Bipole lines only 200 meters from our house, I'd go mad, and I'm not exaggerating. I have struggled many years with mental health issues, and this would be the proverbial straw on the camel's back.

Besides the horrible environmental impact, there are enough studies out there that show magnetic fields can alter a person's brain chemistry with long-term exposure. One of the studies I read states, "*The Pineal Gland is a magneto sensitive organ, what means that it is sensitive to electromagnetic fields (EMF). It is sensitive to electromagnetic waves from computer monitors, cellular phones, microwave ovens, high voltage lines, etc..*

*Electromagnetic fields suppress the activity of the Pineal Gland and reduce melatonin production. EMF also affect serotonin.*" (Source: *Bio-psychiatry, The Netherlands*)

I work the night shift as a nurse in long-term care, and I know how important the hormone Melatonin is for someone's well-being. Shiftwork disrupts the proper production of Melatonin, because it is regulated by daylight, and my Serotonin supply isn't great to begin with. Melatonin is also associated with blood pressure issues and Alzheimer's disease, and seeing that my parents are elderly, this is not a good thing.

We came to this country over 20 years ago looking for peace and quiet, to be able to enjoy nature. My parents sold their land, were able to build a new home, and are thoroughly enjoying the birds and nature in their retirement. But now our home and well-being, the bird sanctuary, and the surrounding landscape is being threatened. We have satellite tv and internet which is not compatible with Bipole lines. Selling our property is not an option, because no-one wants to buy a house so close to a Bipole line. Our home, while dear to our hearts, has become worthless as far as real estate is concerned.

If this was the only route Bipole 3 could take, if it was a logical decision, we probably wouldn't fight with such determination. But that's the whole issue here. Engineers have studied every possible option since the 1980's and know building Bipole 3 on the East side of the province is the best option. There are virtually no farms, no businesses, no homesteads in its path on the East side. And as far as caribou go, there are more caribou herds in Western Manitoba than East. I was recently in Newfoundland, in Gros Morne Park, a World Heritage UNESCO site with many moose and caribou in the park, and guess what? There are hydro lines throughout the park! The wildlife doesn't seem to care, they migrate back and forth. They don't have to live right beside these lines!

Another issue that bothers us is the fact that we have hundreds, if not thousands, of geese passing by our property each spring and fall. Quite often they stay for weeks on end, which makes sense because we are right in the Mississippi Flyway. Bipole 3 would disrupt these poor birds' trek each spring and fall, because the line would be running from West to East, and the birds fly North and South. There is also a substantial risk for birds to get killed by the lines and poles, and I can't even begin to picture this.

Having said that, and as much as we love our animals and nature, I believe a proper government would put its citizens and their well-being first. What blows my mind is that certain Americans seem to have a say in where the Bipole line should be placed, and it's

not even their province, or in their country! The excuse that has been used by our government that the Americans need our power is simply not true anymore. They are switching many of their old plans to purchase our hydro power to cheaper power supplies in their own country. Just watch the debates currently going on in the States and you hear this time and again.

On the financial level, a West side Bipole III would be a burden to our economy. Our businesses and families will all pay much higher electricity bills from here on in just to pay for the extra length of a west side line. It could easily be an extra billion dollars and that may be a conservative estimate. Many farms will have direct costs as a result of the line crossing the best land in the province because their machinery cannot function properly in the vicinity of these Bipole towers and lines. There could be no aerial spraying in the vicinity of the line, because it's illegal to fly under power lines. There will be fields affected that may not have the line right on their field, but may be right next door. These adverse affects will be far and wide. Dairy farmers living nearby may see their milk production drop, and the number of miscarriages go up. If people without a farming background don't think this is a big deal, it will hit home when there is a shortage of grain, milk, vegetables, and meat. Farmers today are trying to maximize production. It is a high risk occupation where some factors are beyond their control. Having to work around transmission towers that have been forced upon them and that pose safety risks for them is unacceptable and needs to be stopped.

Hydro tells us that they can find no proof it will interfere with farming. However, they are completely unable to show us proof that it may not be and cannot guarantee us that there will never be any adverse affects. There simply has not been enough studies done over a long enough period to prove anything one way or another. What has been proven is that you can light up a lightbulb by holding it while standing under the Bipole lines, and that is disturbing.

I am appealing to you today to recommend a change in routing of Bipole III. To affect so many families in such a negative way by coming through such a densely populated part of our province and through our best farming communities is simply wrong. I hope everyone present here understands that we fight because our home is being threatened. A home should be a person's safe haven, where one can relax and recharge, and be safe. The Bipole 3 West route would change all that.

We will continue to pray that God will end this nightmare soon. It's good to know He is more powerful than all of us combined. Thank you.

Helena and Monique Graafland