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Presentation to the CEC Panel on Bipole III

November 1, 2012

By: Chandra Rempel

Good evening, Mr. Chair and Panel Members,

My name is Chandra Rempel and I am from Osborne, Manitoba. I am proud to be a prairie girl who has been raised on our family farm in Southern Manitoba. In fact, I am the daughter of Paul Rempel who has just delivered a speech on behalf of our farm and our family asking for somebody to stand up and take responsibility for what our present government and Manitoba Hydro are about to do to many farms stretching across southern Manitoba. I have 2 brothers, and we are tomorrow's farmers. I would like to speak on behalf of tomorrow's farmers as I'm concerned you have not yet heard our voice.

While my Dad was preparing his speech for this evening, we were once again asking each other how this could actually be happening. How did we get to this point where we have to stand before a Panel and practically beg to put a stop to this nonsense? I felt compelled to say my piece, as I felt very angry, so here I stand and I respectfully thank you for this opportunity, no matter how hard it is for me to remain calm.

My Grandpa and his family immigrated here to escape the unspeakable depravity of the Ukraine in the 1920s. Since that point in time, my family has worked hard to build a farm that will continue on to the next generation. We are so proud of that fact. So many farms in other areas of the province are not as lucky. I say lucky, because that's how I feel. I feel so incredibly blessed to have been born into a farm family in the Red River Valley. Many farms in other less productive areas across the province may not pass on to the next generation. Or, some farms across Manitoba may not have children who are interested in taking over the farm. I understand that. What I don't understand is that in this area of the province where farms are prospering, growing, and becoming more efficient, more productive, and where the future looks so very bright for tomorrow's farmers - how can our government and Manitoba Hydro force their way onto our land to construct Bipole III? What gives them this right when almost everyone else is telling them it is the wrong thing to do? Would you let the province barge into your backyard without your consent and put up a big old pole? I don't think you'd like it either.

I grew up in a very small town. I know all my neighbours; I love my community. We all have a strong connection to the land. It is our land, and many of us look forward to returning to the farm upon leaving for the sake of education. Some of us have left to attend University or College or to just better prepare ourselves for tomorrow's challenges that running farms may bring. Some of us are taking Agriculture, or Agri Business, or perhaps becoming engineers or studying in other areas of interest. Whatever it is that we have chosen to do today, it has been to better prepare us for tomorrow and for coming home to where we always knew we would end up. Back home on the farm, the start of the next generation of

farmers. I know I speak for so many others that may not be able to stand before you at these hearings. Agriculture runs deep in our veins. We are tied to the land.

My generation is very cognizant of the preservation of our environment. We have an understanding of what is needed to sustain and develop our land – the environment – because we work with it on a daily basis. Who better to discern the future of the land than those who are stewards of it?

What is about to happen with Bipole III feels like a very bad dream. How can the government and Manitoba Hydro try to convince us that this decision had to be made to preserve the environment on the east side of Lake Winnipeg? How can a line so much longer be environmental responsible? How can they say we need it for exporting power south when even these sales contracts have evaporated? How can making our farmers maneuver around huge structures - burning more fuel, wasting more fertilizer and more pesticides - be good for the environment?

Whatever efforts the next generation of farmers try to make for the good of our environment, will be defeated and all in vain because of one awful decision that is being forced upon us and our farms. There seems to be no amount of reasoning that can stop it. I could tell you that it's nearly 500 km longer to take the western route. I could tell you that the west side will cost upwards of \$1 billion more. I could tell you how unfair it is to force 148ft hydro poles onto our land and give us 100% continuous liability in the event of an accident. And we all know that the boreal forest you are so protective is all over western Manitoba as well. But you already know all of this, because it is not a numbers game, and it's not about facts either. How can it even be possible that the titled land that my Grandpa owned and farmed before we did, simply be taken from us, against our wills and changed forever.

I have friends - young professionals – just starting out, making their way into their careers, working for Manitoba Hydro. A two minute conversation with any of them regarding the BiPole III project will tell you the truth behind all of this – that the government is forcing Hydro to take the wrong route. Do you know why none of them will step out with this information? They don't want to lose their jobs, and so nobody will speak out with this information because Manitoba Hydro is a big bully.

A decision like this affect us forever. It is my brothers & I, and our friends and then someday, all of our children, who will pay for this poorly conceived decision made today. I am asking you, the Clean Environment Commission Panel to please think about the effects it will have on this prairie girl and all the others who will be tomorrow's stewards of the land and tomorrow's producers. We only have one chance at stopping Bipole III from stomping all over our farms. I want to be on the record of having at least done my little part to help all the others who have spoken before me, and to take a stand on behalf of all of us. Please stop Bipole III from crossing my farm and all the other farms in it's path. At the very least, please make sure that those responsible for forcing this on all of us are being held accountable and recommend that the entire Bipole III project be put on hold so that an independent review of the project can be conducted. That way my brothers and I won't have to look back once it's too late and ask each other how this ever could have ever been allowed to happen. Thank you.