

Clean Environment Commission Brief

Viriden, MB, April 16, 2007

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Dear Commissioners:

I thank the CEC for this opportunity to speak. My name is Bob Senff, and I am a retired teacher living in Oak Lake. I have lived and taught in the Fort La Bosse SD in Southwestern Manitoba since 1970.

I am here today to present the ideas of a number of moderate people who are unable to attend this hearing. I will also speak for some of the Grade 8 and 9 students in Fort La Bosse schools.

Without exception, these people are pleased that the CEC and the Government of Manitoba are monitoring the expansion of ILOs in the province. Undoubtedly, this commission has heard presentations from a wide variety of stakeholders. The range from pro to con must be very great. This is a complex issue, and we hope that the CEC will continue to monitor many other spheres of operation.

I was most impressed by the insights of the students in Grades 8 and 9. They were researching water, air, and land contamination, and they were very serious about the topic. They expressed concerns about the quantity of water required for hogs. This resulted in a large volume of wastewater. Great discussions centered on the variety of contaminants, including phosphorus. Their message is that each and every one of us must work and sacrifice to improve the quality of water in Manitoba, especially in Lake Winnipeg.

They laughed at the old joke about "getting wind" of a hog operation. Then they became serious and recognized that improvements to air quality must be made. They were concerned about airborne health threats to workers and to those living too near large operations. Their message is to encourage everyone to do his or her part to prevent air pollution, increase in greenhouse gas emissions, and the spread of disease.

The availability of clean, arable land is still very desirable to the next generation of Manitoba farmers. Young people are appreciative of new methods of protecting land from erosion, chemical pollution, and toxic damage. They hope that the present generation will not poison the land any further. Their message is to treat the land with respect so that farming will be available to them.

On the other hand, they spoke about the economic contributions of the hog industry in Manitoba. They hope to be able to have the opportunity to work in a viable industry as owners, operators, or workers.

The future of the hog industry in Manitoba must depend on wise decisions, made by knowledgeable people. This requires solid scientific research and information, clear and honest communication, and a vision for the future. That is what the students and the people I have talked with desire – a future. How do we achieve this? Through balance and moderation, arising from sincere care for our environment.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to share the insights of young people in Southwestern Manitoba.

Sincerely,

Bob Senff, Oak Lake