My name is Scott Blonski – one of perhaps hundreds of unfortunate rural home owners who may be forced to live within 1/2 mile of MB Hydro's proposed Final Preferred Route of the MMTP.

I graduated from the University of Manitoba with B. Sc. Civil Engineering. I worked hard, through school, and beyond, for everything I have. I worked up to 3 jobs at a time, including one full time, through high school, to survive and to have a chance at a better future.

Much of my adult working life has been closely associated with various branches of engineering, including Industrial, Mechanical, Structural, and Municipal Engineering. I have many years of heavy construction experience and instruct engineering technology to college students.

I also possess extensive first-hand knowledge of the planning area of the MMTP, including the Final Preferred Route. My first-hand knowledge encompasses southeastern Manitoba in the general area bounded by Beausejour down to Warroad. This knowledge and experience is mostly the result of my family. My stepfather's parents were some of the earliest European settlers in the Woodridge / Sandilands area, pre dating the arrival of what was then the Canadian Northern Pacific Railway, now CN Rail. My step - grandfather built the original Woodridge catholic church, donating his time and most of the material. My "dad's" childhood home was one of the earliest permanent homes constructed in the Village of Woodridge. He shared it with his mother and father and 14 surviving siblings through the great depression years, WWII, and into the early 1950's. The entire family had a strong bond with the area, and seemed to know every detail of the land, its history, people, wildlife, and economics. Of course, the area was a perennial favorite for vacations, hiking, camping, exploring, berry picking, and visiting with relatives too numerous to keep track of. That's how I know of many features in the area that most people would be completely oblivious to. For example – "Google" search "Bedford, Manitoba". It is the site of a forgotten ghost town on the railway between Marchand and Sandilands, immediately adjacent to what is now the Watson P. Davidson Wildlife Management Area. Bedford once had houses, several sandy streets, a railroad operated gravel pit complete with its own railway spur track, and a small railroad depot with water tower for steam locomotives…not much remains today.

The following is a point form summary of my concerns that I share with many regarding the MMTP project:

- I have been arguing against MMTP's routing since May 2014 – when in round 2 of public engagement the routes that were chosen as the Final Preferred Route were suddenly announced through our relatively highly populated rural areas:
    - I have spent 100's of hours
        - Researching the project
        - Communicating with

                - Other members of the public
                - Bi-pole groups
                - Independent professionals in various disciplines about their opinions of the MMTP project and its details
                - Hydro
                - All levels of government
                - Regulatory bodies
            - Attending meetings, open houses, information sessions and presentations
        - I have and continue to provide information, service, and support to my fellow rural residents concerning MMTP
- I believe this project should be routed away from homes and people as much as possible, while also minimizing environmental impacts and needless destruction of *undisturbed - intact* and *protected* natural lands
- I am not out for monetary gain or other ulterior motives – we just want to be left alone and not be helplessly victimized by bad decisions made by irresponsible people who exhibit incompetency, or too careless, and perhaps lazy, to do their jobs properly.
- I stand to serve and protect
    - Concerns of rural residents
    - Privacy, serenity, and security of rural residents
    - Rights and well-being of all Manitobans
- I want to preserve our homes and our natural surroundings we value so much
    - Wildlife / forest cover on our private lands
    - Intact / previously undisturbed and undeveloped natural lands
    - Wildlife and forrest in general

My MMTP Impact Concerns as a Citizen of Rural Manitoba

- Socio - Economic impacts (undeniably money is important in society, too)
    - Lowering of property values (Hydro claimed this won't happen)
        - Lost potential equity and growth
    - Lost business opportunities
        - Residential subdivisions
        - Business plans
        - Future property development profits
    - Easements whereby property owners must pay taxes on property they won't be able to use to full potential because of the MMTP.

        - Only own it on paper / “technically” but limited in its current use and future potential
        - Many potential beneficial future uses will be stolen from us
    - Liability for lines on our private property
        - Insurance concerns – can we even get liability coverage to protect ourselves? I have asked my insurance agent – the answer was “No”…
        - Unauthorized use by trespassers - hunting, using ORV’s, snowmobiles, etc. Personal injury lawsuits by trespassers – who will protect us?
        - Attenuating risks and damages
        - Hydro’s own usage and traffic – who is responsible, who will make good damages?
    - Increased insurance costs – why is this going to be our problem when it isn’t our fault and we have no choice?
    - Property devaluation and damages that we will be stuck with in perpetuity.
- Future plans
    - Everyone from longtime residents to rural newcomers who have or are investing everything into homes and property will be severely impacted
    - Some will suffer unfair economic hardships from losses due to the MMTP:
        - Sand and gravel resources
        - Residential subdivision plans
        - Small business plans
        - Agricultural, existing and potential
    - Raise families – impact will continue to adversely affect existing families and hinder attracting new families to the area.
- Potential new risks
    - Health – still largely unknown risks
        - EMF’s and stray voltages and currents – no one can be certain of the future health effects on people, nor guarantee our safety – do not forget - asbestos use was considered mundanely safe for over a century, for seemingly everything under the sun. What we don’t know *can* kill us. Often we find out after the damage is done – much too late. Formaldehyde rings a bell? Tetraethyl Lead?
        - Herbicides used to clear the ROW – ground water contaminations – sand and permeable soils in the populated preferred route of the MMTP can leach the toxins directly to our potable water wells.
        - Sound emanating from the transmission line
    - Unwelcome traffic through ROW’s
        - Quads, dirt bikes

- Snowmobiles
- Hunters
- Trespassers
- "Bush Parties" and other similar illegal activities attracting disorderly and intoxicated persons to trespass on private lands due to increased access by power line trails. See local crime reports in our area newspapers for specific examples of this problem where existing power lines invite unauthorized access to our properties.

  (Note: MB. Hydro insists this won't occur because they will "work with the property owner to install double locked gates…etc. to prevent unauthorized access"… This is **FALSE**. There are limitations they don't openly mention, whereby Hydro will not agree or pay to do this, and this offer has been stated by MB Hydro to only be valid if an effective fence already exists across the ROW. Keep in mind for most of the MMTP, no fence is currently necessary (prior to the power line being built) - because the ROW is naturally guarded by impassable bush and forest, or wetland. That is, before MB Hydro clears all that away and builds the power line! **FACT** - in my nearly 40 years of travelling all over Manitoba for recreation and work, both on and off road – and have been extremely familiar with the area of MMTP since I was 4 years old, and I have been to practically every town in Manitoba with over 1000 people except Churchill, and driven millions of kilometers on PTH and PR highways and municipal gravel roads in this province – I do not know of one example where MB Hydro has themselves actually installed even one example of any kind of mitigation measures to keep trespassers out of power line ROW's – not even so much as a "No Trespassing" or "Private Property" Sign!!!!!!! In fact, any mitigation measures I do know of were installed and paid for by the property owner. **FACT** – much of the public who use off road vehicles for recreation, especially unlicensed and uninsured vehicles and operators, tend to assume all power line ROW's are free to use public property; unaware of it being PRIVATE PROPERTY!)

- Fires – often set carelessly by trespassing hunters and ORV operators (see above)

- Constant noise from the power lines in operation – humming, snapping, winds, corona effects
- Physiological effects

        - Stress and apprehension
        - Lowered self esteem
        - View - Depression
        - Sense of loss
        - Lost security, peace of mind

General Concerns I share with the Public

- Why is hydro routing this line here?
    - Is it because:
        - Better politically and tactfully for them, even if many more times expensive for them (and thereby directly – for us)?
        - Easier, more convenient for Hydro as a corporation, to step on us as private land owners (power to expropriate)?
        - Easier for the executives to avoid doing their work and actually performing their responsibility and duty to the various citizenry of Manitoba they are supposed to be working for?
- Why not a slightly more eastern route? I haven't heard a single believable or plausible and sensible reason against it yet, and I have not heard any logical excuses that don't conflict with other statements made by Hydro, and the excuses keep growing and changing, depending on who I ask, when, and where. Hardly convincing.

  Transparency? Sure, it is implied, but the MMTP route selection process is as clean, clear, and pure as the waters of the Red River north of the North End Wastewater Treatment Plant discharge pipe (odor is similar, too)!

- Many citizens and residents plan to retire here and pass on their homes, legacy and life's work
    - On to their children
    - And successive generations
- Practically Irreversible impacts to existing:
    - Aesthetics
        - Natural surroundings and forest are a positive feature of this area
        - Wildlife is comparably plentiful to even crown lands areas because of limited hunting and relative inaccessibility
        - Ambient noise levels
        - Stigma of living too close to a large power line

        - People don't generally choose to live near something like this – definitely not a realtor's "selling feature" – 500 kV AC, 200 feet tall, 300 foot wide ROW.
    - Safety and quality of life and environment for all:
        - Residents
        - Attracting new people and business
        - Hindering municipal road use – both during construction by multiple contractors, and while in operation
        - Security – increased access by trespassers, loss of security provided by forested view block, with clearing of ROW
        - Fire hazards and expense of fighting fires set in ROW
        - Road safety – clearing of ROW destroys natural protection from snow drifts, due to loss of treed windbreaks
- Does our seemingly not so "Public Utility" monopoly corporation consider us expendable little people?
    - Hydro is "screening forward "their preferred SIL route – period end. They are also arguably completely ignoring any information gathered, or the ostensible purpose or usefulness of conducting public consultations and engagement. It all appears so politically correct and paints MB Hydro as good corporate citizens, etc., but that clearly cannot be considered the true motivation. For despite all arguments against the Final Preferred Route, based from reasonable logic, sensible engineering practices, and public concerns and protests, they are staying fast to this decision. Why?
    - Why is MB Hydro playing us for simple fools? The EPRI – GTC methodology used to "screen forward" (i.e. force to the front no matter what) the MMTP Final Preferred Route can be most politely described as being easy to manipulate. I would call it a bunch of smoke and mirrors. In fact, this methodology can be easily "calibrated" (their words) by MB Hydro staff to steer in just about any direction and wherever they want it to go. The process relies on numbers being applied to assign different decision making criteria values to vary amounts of importance, or "weights", and how much that importance will be compared against a subjective array of other influences, and in how many different selection criteria categories it will be applied to, with possibility of further dilution of only select criteria in the process of overall selection. And just guess who is determining those numbers and weights? Yep, that's right – a select group of MB Hydro employees. And guess at how their chain of command works? And guess at how many high ranking MB Hydro executives it would take to unethically skew the results of the methodology to quantify their own

personal practices and preferences at an unnatural advantage? It all boils down to rotten eggs. Any ethical person who has knowledge and experience of numerical systems (and I do – as part of my formal post-secondary education) used in decision making would be appalled by the biases and subjectivity of this methodology, especially as used by MB Hydro. Especially given the fox has been put in charge of taking chicken inventory.

- Where is Hydro's obligation and responsibility to Manitoba concerning:
  - Supporting the rights of rural residents & municipalities
  - Being the responsible corporate citizen they claim to be (actions speak louder than words)
  - Harming the potential growth of rural municipalities by
    - discouraging increased habitation and associated tax revenues
    - limiting improvements to services and continued development
  - Sacrificing areas taken for the ROW from potential community socio economic growth and rendering them stagnant as future local public revenue sources
    - Compare, for example, the difference to the municipality in potential growth - between the MMTP ROW vs. many rural residential homes
  - Hydro is Public Crown Corporation and supposedly "Not – For – Profit" – right? Where is the money coming from for "gifts" and "Community Development Initiatives" offered recently to municipalities along the preferred route, and larger (more voters?) communities that influence decisions made by governments - **ONLY**? **WHY?**
  - What right does a publicly owned utility have in deciding who gets "gifts" and who doesn't? It is our money they are giving away as **they** see fit?
  - It is a mistake for towns and municipalities to accept these one-time gifts – the future costs and losses will quickly outweigh the one time "gift".
  - Is it really a "gift" or something else – something politically immoral - perhaps?
- Many people are being misled through Hydro by their strategic timing and planning, seemingly deliberate omissions of details and facts, careful wording and placements of their "trust us" facts and figures, which are later revealed to be completely false or inaccurate, and refusal to directly answer certain key questions asked by the municipalities and the public
  - A few examples of suspected spin doctoring:
    - Property values won't be affected by MMTP – so claimed MB Hydro public representatives in documents and under questioning

        - Rate increases that started out low, yet keep increasing themselves – first 4%, now 8%, every year, for how many years? What will they do next? When will enough be enough? Can we afford to keep buying their "Cadillac" projects?
        - Relatively unknown future lump sum rate increase noted in PUB documents – not many people have been made aware of the "just a little more" increase Hydro has requested beyond what has already made it to the news press copy.
        - Implications of 78+ years of massive Hydro and provincial debts from Hydro overspending and mismanagement.
        - Never ending escalating construction project budgets and projected costs
    - Just the beginning – really just the tip of the iceberg that could sink us all

To the CEC, Manitoba Sustainable Development (and beyond):

- Investigate with us; we want to know:
    - Why us? Why here? Get real answers from the Hydro people in control and pushing the buttons – make them spill the beans!
    - What are the **TRUE** effects
        - hazards and risks
        - hardships and potential losses
        - liabilities – monitoring, mitigating, checks and balances, and controls
            - Fences and gates
            - Insurance
            - Billing hydro for damages!
            - And so on…
- Assign independent monitoring of Hydro's construction and operations
- Hold MB Hydro to their promises
- Hold MB Hydro responsible and accountable!!!!!!
- Send them back to the drawing board, and don't come back until you are willing to REALLY be caring, honest, responsible, and TRANSPARENT.

-Scott Blonski,

Ste. Genevieve, MB