

MANITOBA CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

HEARING

VIVIAN SILICA SAND EXTRACTION PROJECT

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Transcript of Proceedings  
Held at Brokenhead River  
Community Hall

Beausejour, Manitoba  
Monday, March 13, 2023

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CLEAN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION

Jay Doering - Chairman  
Laurie Streich - Commissioner  
Ian Gillies - Commissioner  
Terry Johnson - Commissioner  
Peter Crocker - Secretary to the Commission  
Courtney Harmer - Administrative Assistant  
Bill Bowles - Legal Counsel  
Bob Armstrong - Writer

SIO SILICA CORP

Feisal Somji - President and CEO  
Brent Bullen - COO  
Jesse Baker - Legal Counsel

PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS

Matthew Wiens  
Rusty Gawluk  
Sue Ziemski  
Cathy Tymko  
Taylor Galvin  
Shandy Walls  
Erin Neufeld  
Jocelyn Hamill  
Lorraine Boitson  
Right Honourable Ed Schreyer  
Glen Fuhl  
Patrick Therrien  
Mike Sutherland  
Nichola Hughes  
Valerie Ralke  
Pamela Langstaff

Reporter: Katryna Chalapenko

1 MONDAY MARCH 13, 2023

2 UPON COMMENCING AT 07:00 P.M.

3

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Good evening,  
5 everyone. I will call this meeting to order. It's a  
6 pleasure to see another great turn out. So, thank you all  
7 for coming. Welcome to the third and final meeting in a  
8 series of Sio Silica Clean -- Manitoba Clean Environment  
9 hearings dedicated to hear from you, members of the  
10 public. We want to acknowledge that we're meeting here  
11 today on Treaty 1 Territory, the original lands of the  
12 Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene people, and  
13 the homeland of the Metis Nation. We respect the Treaties  
14 that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the  
15 harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves  
16 to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities  
17 in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration. For  
18 those of you that I haven't met yet, my name is Jay  
19 Doering, and I'm the chair of this panel which is  
20 conducting the review of the silica sand extraction  
21 project, and I'm joined by my fellow commissioners  
22 Gillies, Streich, and Johnson. Also present, behind them  
23 is Peter Crocker, the Commission's Secretary, Courtney  
24 Harmer, who's over in the corner, the Commission's  
25 administrative assistant, Bill Bowles, our legal counsel,

1 and Bob Armstrong, our writer, are also present. I want  
2 to recognize our participants, and the word participants  
3 has a specific meaning in the process and guidelines of  
4 Clean Environment hearings. A participant means a person  
5 or group of persons designated as such by the Commission  
6 in accordance with the practice direction on party status.  
7 The participants for these hearings are Dennis LeNeveu,  
8 the Rural Municipality of Springfield, Our Line in the  
9 Sand, the Municipal Silica Sand Advisory Committee, and  
10 Manitoba Eco-Network.

11

12 In terms of, very briefly, a little  
13 background, we're here today because on November 15th,  
14 2021, the Minister asked us to hold public hearings to  
15 review the "Environmental Impact Statement" prepared by  
16 CanWhite Sands, now Sio Silica Corporation for the silica  
17 sand extraction project. We're guided by amended terms of  
18 reference issued to us by the Minister on January 13th,  
19 2022. Under those terms of reference, we are to, and I  
20 quote, "Conduct a technical review of the *Environmental*  
21 *Act* proposal and the hydrogeology and geochemistry  
22 assessment reports, provide advice and recommendations to  
23 the Minister regarding potential environmental and health  
24 effects of the propose sequential installation, operation  
25 and decommissioning of silica sand extraction wells for

1 the silica sand extraction project, hold public hearings,  
2 which takes us to tonight, to provide members of the  
3 public the opportunity for input and prepare and file a  
4 report with the Minister. This report is to outline the  
5 results of the Commission's review, document what we heard  
6 and provided, provide advice and recommendation for the  
7 Minister's consideration." The proceedings of all our  
8 meetings are transcribed. This is a requirement of the  
9 *Environment Act*. The oral statement is a chance for you  
10 to give those present your personal knowledge, your views,  
11 as well as any concerns you may have about this project.  
12 You are also asked -- welcome to ask questions of the  
13 proponent. But I would note, the proponent is not obliged  
14 to either be here today or to answer questions. They are,  
15 and so, I will introduce the members who are present. Mr.  
16 Somji is President and CEO of Sio Silica, Mr. Bullen is  
17 Chief Operating Officer of Sio Silica, and Mr. Duncanson  
18 is -- Mr. Baker is here tonight, who is Legal Counsel for  
19 Sio Silica. I would also like to note, if there is anyone  
20 in your community or generally from the area, who is  
21 unable to attend our sessions, but who wishes to provide  
22 us with a written statement, they are more than welcome to  
23 do so. A written statement may be made by way of a  
24 letter, an e-mail, or you can even go to our website and  
25 send us comments directly. The Commission will continue

1 to accept statements until the hearing record closes on  
2 March 24th, 2023. If you are here to make an oral  
3 presentation, I will call you up to the table that has the  
4 projector on it, you will state your name and spell it for  
5 the transcriber, who is not in this room but is actually  
6 in Toronto. Each member of the public will have ten  
7 minutes and will be sworn in by the Commission Secretary.  
8 I ask only two things of everyone at tonight's session,  
9 that is, that we respect our time allotments and that we  
10 respect each other.

11

12 To avoid any misunderstandings of this  
13 public hearing, I want to note that notwithstanding, that  
14 members of the public may be allowed up to 15 minutes,  
15 Section 3.11, Role of the Chair, which can be found in the  
16 "Manitoba CEC Process Guidelines, Respect at Public  
17 Hearings" notes that the chair may, under subsection C,  
18 limit the duration of a submission. Having said that, I  
19 would add -- I would add that there would need to be a  
20 compelling reason to do so. In the case of Saturday's  
21 public forum in Anola, and this evening's here tonight,  
22 the number of presentations at 15 minutes each precludes  
23 allowing everyone 15 minutes each. At present, we have 18  
24 people signed up, so we are here probably till at least  
25 ten o'clock this evening, assuming everyone speaks for ten

1 minutes. All right. So, everyone's reduced to ten  
2 minutes this evening. Each presenter, when your time is -  
3 - when you hit the one minute mark, I will raise a yellow  
4 flag and that indicates you have one minute left. When  
5 you hit the ten-minute mark, your microphone will go dead.  
6 Yes, sir?

7

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible) make a  
9 suggestion (inaudible).

10

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I'll take that under  
12 advisement. Having done this many times before, I'm going  
13 to stick with the one minute.

14

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible).

16

17 THE CHAIRMAN: But I thank you for  
18 the comment. I believe we are ready to swear in our first  
19 presenter. So, what I will do is I will call out the  
20 person that is coming up now and I will call up the person  
21 -- and I will name the person that is to follow. So, you  
22 will have some advance notice, roughly ten minutes that  
23 you are up next. The first person this evening is Matthew  
24 Wiens. So, Mr. Wiens, if you could come up to the front  
25 and be sworn in by the Secretary, we will get underway.

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UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible) next  
presenter.

THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry, thank you very  
much. Yes, I can't even follow my own rules. Herman Boo  
follows that.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (inaudible).

THE CHAIRMAN: And this is the yellow  
flag. One minute.

THE CHAIRMAN: Don't avoid eye  
contact.

SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state and  
spell your name for the record, please?

MR. WIENS: Matthew -- M-A-T-T-H-E-W --  
Wiens -- W-I-E-N-S.

SECRETARY: Mr. Wiens, do you solemnly  
affirm that the evidence to be given by you shall be the  
truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?



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MR. WIENS: I do.

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SECRETARY: Thank you.

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MR. WIENS: Thank you for this opportunity to express my view of this proposed project. I've had the opportunity to read most of the transcripts of these hearings to date, as well as much of the information posted on the website for this hearing. Based on what I have read there, taken in the context of my life experiences, my professional knowledge as a former climate change specialist with the Provincial Department of Agriculture, my expertise is an agronomist, and my experiences as a farmer, I offer the following comments. I read about potential for contaminants to enter the groundwater. Thousands of wells will be drilled. Air will be forced into the sandstone aquifer. Water and sand slurry will be brought to the surface where they will be separated and as much water as possible will be sent back down into the aquifer. I read about the potential for contaminants from diesel exhaust to get into the aquifer because of the air injection and the reintroduction of the water that was pushed up with the air. I read about oxygen being introduced to the aquifer and potentially

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1 causing heavy metals to be released from shale and  
2 contaminate the groundwater. Some experts say this will  
3 not be a concern because overlying limestone layers will  
4 fall into the water-filled cavern and neutralize any acid  
5 that might form because of the added oxygen. What if  
6 surprises occur and heavy metal contamination does occur,  
7 or some other form of contamination does occur? Is it  
8 reversible? I have strong doubts. How would people with  
9 contaminated wells be compensated? Will Sio Silica  
10 provide clean water on demand for as long as contamination  
11 persists? What if contamination persists for generations?  
12 I read about the disintegration of the shale aquitard,  
13 which is the barrier between the carbonate aquifer and the  
14 sandstone aquifer. It is likely to happen above each void  
15 created in the sandstone, thereby creating thousands,  
16 perhaps over 7,000 large areas in southeastern Manitoba  
17 where the sandstone aquifer and the overlying carbonate  
18 aquifer will become connected. I read from Sio Silica  
19 supplemental information June 2nd, 2022, that the  
20 extraction well design includes a grout seal for the  
21 sandstone -- limestone isolation to prevent inter aquifer  
22 mixing, but I didn't find any revisions to this plan in  
23 light of the knowledge that the shale layer disintegrates,  
24 and the two aquifers become connected across the entire  
25 top of the sandstone cavity. I read about the importance

1 of sealing off each one of these thousands of wells to  
2 prevent surface contaminants from polluting the aquifers,  
3 but that it is inevitable that some of these seals will  
4 eventually fail. In my opinion, drilling this many wells,  
5 causing this many potential pathways for contamination of  
6 our groundwater is an unacceptable risk. It sounds, to  
7 me, like a recipe for perpetual boil water advisories in  
8 the future. I read about the test well cavity that was  
9 investigated with side scan sonar, after the sand was  
10 mined out. Not only the three metre shale layer was  
11 observed to crumble into the cavity created by sand  
12 extraction, but also more than a two-metre thickness of  
13 limestone above the shale was observed to fall into the  
14 cavity. I read about Stantec's geological assessment that  
15 if the void sizes adhere to a certain size based on the  
16 thickness of the overlying layers of limestone and till,  
17 and of specified distances between the cavities are  
18 respected, there's no concern of the ground caving in and  
19 creating sinkholes at the surface based on the tests and  
20 knowledge they have gathered so far. I also read about  
21 the limestone layer not being uniform, and that vertical  
22 tracks exist in places, which could mean that there are  
23 places where the limestone layer is weaker than what  
24 Stantec observed. I read about uncertainty and  
25 sensitivity analysis, and that the sensitivity and

1       uncertainty analyses may not have been conducted  
2       adequately, and that it did not take worst case scenarios  
3       into account. I read that there have been no proposals by  
4       Sio Silica, of what they would do in the scenario of a  
5       cave in. What if a cave in occurs at some point in time,  
6       maybe 20 years from now, maybe 100 years from now, maybe  
7       150 years from now? What would that do to water quality  
8       in the aquifers? I think it means a direct entry point  
9       for contaminants from the surface to enter the aquifers.  
10      Do these voids mean a loss of property value? To say that  
11      crop yields would suffer in a sinkhole, or that grazing  
12      days would decrease, would be a huge understatement. Has  
13      Sio Silica committed to repairing sinkhole damage, should  
14      it occur? How long will Sio Silica be around to repair  
15      damage if cave-ins occur? Would you feel comfortable  
16      building your house over one of these voids? I don't  
17      think I'm interested to buy a piece of land with this  
18      honeycomb network of caverns beneath it. Is it safe to  
19      build a road on top of these voids? Will it be safe  
20      centuries from now? Will maps be forever kept accessible  
21      to the people living in this region so that they know  
22      before the -- before they build above the void? I read  
23      about the Southeast Regional Groundwater Management Plan  
24      and there are already -- that there are already stresses  
25      to groundwater quality and quantity in this region,

1 including saltwater intrusion and regional areas of  
2 overdevelopment, which were not taken into consideration  
3 during the environmental impact assessments. I read about  
4 the lack of a cumulative impact assessment to take into  
5 consideration the cumulative impacts of past, present, and  
6 future activities in considering the environmental impacts  
7 of the proposed silica sands mining project. Nowhere did  
8 I read about a climate risk assessment to consider the  
9 groundwater dynamics in the case of a prolonged multi year  
10 extreme drought, nor an assessment of the risks from  
11 extreme levels of precipitation and flooding, if it occurs  
12 during or after mining. Both extreme drought and extreme  
13 precipitation are known to be more likely now than in the  
14 past because of climate change and a warming atmosphere.  
15 It is no longer prudent to base future planning on past  
16 climate data. What used to be a once in 100-year  
17 precipitation event now happens every 20 years. This lack  
18 of climate risk assessment is a serious shortcoming of the  
19 impact assessment process. These aquifers are the source  
20 of drinking water for many people, including myself and my  
21 family. In the case of our well water, the tests we have  
22 done over the years have always shown it to be excellent  
23 quality, requiring no treatment at all. He will work to  
24 protect this immeasurably valuable resource.

25

1                   To maintain a livable planet, we urgently  
2                   and rapidly need to transition away from fossil fuel use.  
3                   Solar panels and batteries may be part of that transition,  
4                   but if we destroy our water and our land to produce them,  
5                   what have we gained? Just because this new method of  
6                   extracting the sand is less damaging than an open pit  
7                   mine, does not mean that the impacts are acceptable or  
8                   that the risk of potential impacts is acceptable. I am  
9                   strongly opposed to this project.

10

11                   THE CHAIRMAN:           Chair, thank you very  
12                   much. Mr. Secretary, do we have any more chairs? If  
13                   there's a free chair, you are welcome to take it, whether  
14                   it's behind a table or not. Herman Bau is next, followed  
15                   by Rusty Gawluk. Herman, please come to the front.  
16                   Herman? Okay, going once, going twice. Herman lost the  
17                   spot. Rusty Gawluk. Will be followed by Susan Ziemski.  
18                   Rusty, can you please come forward?

19

20                   SECRETARY:    Secretary. Can you state and  
21                   spell your name for the record, please?

22

23                   MR. GAWLUK:   My name is Rusty Gawluk, R-U-  
24                   S-T-Y G-A-W-L-U-K.

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1                   SECRETARY: Mr. Gawluk, can you place your  
2 hand on the Bible, please? Do you swear that the evidence  
3 to be given by you shall be the truth, the whole truth,  
4 and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

5

6                   MR. GAWLUK: I do.

7

8                   SECRETARY: Thank you.

9

10                  MR. GAWLUK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for  
11 this opportunity. A tough act to follow. As mentioned,  
12 my name is Rusty Gawluk. My wife and I live in East  
13 Braintree, Manitoba, which is on the south end of the RM  
14 of Reynolds. We had our water well drilled in 2011 by  
15 Friesen Drillers and were fortunate to have a flowing or  
16 artesian well with five gallon per minute recovery, and  
17 after analysis by ALS in Winnipeg, was found that our  
18 water was clear, clean, well within the recommended  
19 drinking levels. And I was advised during that analysis  
20 that a water softener would have been a waste of money.  
21 So, we've got good water. I want -- I say this because I  
22 want you to understand, I have a vested interest in this  
23 process. I have clean water now. I'd like to keep clean  
24 water forever, as does everybody else.

25

1 Over the past two weeks, I've had the  
2 opportunity to attend each day of the CEC hearings in  
3 person regarding this -- regarding this extraction  
4 process, and I've heard opening comments by the  
5 proponents, Sio Silica, as well as each of the  
6 participants. I've heard presentations from Sio Silica  
7 and each of the participants, and I've heard each of those  
8 presentations questioned. They were questioned by  
9 engineers, they were questioned by scientists, and I'll  
10 state right now that I am neither an accredited scientist  
11 or engineer, I'm just me. I find it absolutely amazing  
12 how much thought, calculations, and considerations have  
13 gone into this matter from both sides. The research is  
14 extensive, and I believe cover pretty much all of the  
15 topics or concerns that the residents who are looking for  
16 our water and environment to protect it will have -- or do  
17 have. Participants, scientists, and engineers have agreed  
18 to, or endorsed, a significant amount of the Stantec and  
19 AECOM modelling data and processes. They're not debating  
20 the data. I've heard repeated recommendations for  
21 additional testing to confirm extraction process results,  
22 specifically testing of the cluster wells regarding  
23 aquifer interaction and mixing, cavity degradation, or  
24 unexpected amounts of collapses and sidewall settling.  
25 I've heard repeated recommendations for ongoing monitoring



1 of the process, including monitoring of individuals such  
2 as us -- or participation in. I've heard recommendations  
3 for developing plans to deal with, if something goes  
4 wrong, what are the corrective measures? Well  
5 abandonment. Plans to deal with the waste rock that's  
6 going to come out. Plans for closure.

7  
8 During part of the proponents'  
9 presentations, I heard them talk about their TARP plan,  
10 targeted action and response plan, and although they  
11 admitted that this isn't completely developed, it is  
12 designed to deal with anything that comes up that doesn't  
13 seem to fit the process, or expected process, to react to  
14 it, and either stop, mitigate, or correct the measure, and  
15 then hopefully move on in a more successful pattern or a  
16 process.

17  
18 I've heard Sio demonstrate a willingness to  
19 develop the plans that were suggested, identified -- that  
20 these types of plans are normally developed after the  
21 licence, but they're willing to move into this. I've  
22 heard that there's already a plan to have continuous  
23 monitoring of the water quantity and quality. I've heard  
24 that there's a plan to put the stop button in the hands of  
25 an independent entity, so somebody other than them will be

1 able to stop the process if there appears to be something  
2 out of place.

3  
4 There's been much more testimony other than  
5 what I've listed, but I believe these points are a huge  
6 part of the consideration for the issuing of a licence to  
7 Sio, or not. I also consider the fact that in the past  
8 two weeks of testimony, not one of the scientists or  
9 engineers have said this can't be done. Okay, I think  
10 that's an important part right there. I don't know if  
11 we're to a point where it can, but none of them will say  
12 that it can't. I've heard recommendations, I've heard  
13 suggestions, I've heard a lot of different information,  
14 but I've not heard that this will not work.

15  
16 In generations past, there were times when  
17 hard choices had to be made for the good of the many.  
18 Imagine the courage it took to sign up to cross the ocean  
19 and fight for freedom in a foreign land, so that that type  
20 of battle didn't have to come into our country. Imagine  
21 the courage it took to sit on the first rocket that  
22 carried a human into space, or to be sitting in the  
23 control room with your fingers crossed, hoping nothing  
24 went wrong. Imagine the courage it took to sit -- or that  
25 of the people left to their homelands, to come to this

1 country for a better life. And imagine that the courage  
2 of our Indigenous communities that have watched all of  
3 this change come to their homes and must try to coexist  
4 with so many different cultures, ways of life, and an  
5 accelerated rate of progress that wasn't present before we  
6 came here.

7  
8 Over the past 10 or 20 years, I've heard  
9 real increase in the term, 'It's my right'. It seems  
10 everybody has rights about just about everything. I also  
11 see that when some person says this is my right, it  
12 usually steps on the rights of another person. So, it  
13 seems to be fairly pointed. I think it's also important  
14 for each of us to realize and agree that we all are guilty  
15 of a level of hypocrisy. How many here have a cell phone?  
16 How many here have laptop computers, desktop computers,  
17 all of these products that are made with silica sand? It  
18 seems that we're more in tune with keeping up with  
19 technology and using it, as long as the risk isn't in our  
20 backyard.

21  
22 The world's in a crappy place right now.  
23 We have greenhouse gases out of control, our dependence on  
24 hydrocarbon or fossil fuels is needing to be decreased.  
25 I've been to Los Angeles myself a number of times, and

1 believe me, on a calm air you can see -- a calm day, you  
2 can see the air. It's a greenish brown and it burns your  
3 eyes and your nose. How would we like to be there?

4

5 The comedian, George Carlin, said in one of  
6 his monologues, 'If you drive faster than me, you're a  
7 maniac, and if you drive slower than me, you're an idiot.'  
8 That's kind of sort of means if you don't think like way,  
9 I think, eh. My way is good, and others are wrong.

10

11 How about responsibility? How about our  
12 responsibility to contribute to the success of our world  
13 and all that share it? I mention this topic because I  
14 understand that the sand that is being sought will have a  
15 primary use in the solar industry aimed at reducing gas --  
16 greenhouse gas and reducing dependence on fossil fuels.  
17 To me, that fact makes this a worldwide issue and not just  
18 a Manitoba issue. I'm not suggesting that we throw  
19 caution to the wind and just dig into the ground and dig  
20 this sand out. Please forgive me, I'm not saying that.  
21 To that belief, I will add that I -- if we don't do all we  
22 can -- reasonably do to reduce climate change and global  
23 warming, we may not have much of a future for those  
24 generations. We want to have our properties for our  
25 children, grandchildren, great grandchildren. What if

1 they can't see through the air to get to it? Okay?

2

3 Yes, I agree that there will be sacrifice  
4 connected to them mining this sand, but is the alternative  
5 of not contributing this sand to the fight against the  
6 destruction of our climate not worth it? I don't know if  
7 the testing is there to say go ahead and start. I know  
8 that we have a lot of great minds looking at this. And  
9 today, we can look at movies and pictures from Mars. If  
10 we can do that, if we can have the technology to get up to  
11 another planet and communicate back and forth, then I  
12 think we have the minds that can take this project to a  
13 level where it can be safely done without sacrificing or  
14 jeopardizing the water, the quality of the water, the  
15 sinkholes, all of the negatives that we've talked about,  
16 and bring this sand up and let it be used, or at least a  
17 part of it -- let it be used to help this world become a  
18 better place for everybody, because sometimes the needs of  
19 the many outdo the weeds of the -- the needs of the few.  
20 Thank you.

21

22 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Thank you,  
23 sir. Rusty is followed by Sue, and Sue will be followed  
24 by Cathy -- Cathy Tymko.

25

1                   SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state your  
2 name for the -- and spell your name for the record,  
3 please?

4

5                   MS. ZIEMSKI: My name is Sue Ziemski -- S-U-  
6 E Z-I-E-M-S-K-I.

7

8                   SECRETARY: Sue, can you put your hand in  
9 the Bible, and do you swear that the evidence to be given  
10 by you shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing  
11 but the truth, so help you God?

12

13                   MS. ZIEMSKI: Yes, it will.

14

15                   SECRETARY: Thank you.

16

17                   MS. ZIEMSKI: Okay. Good evening, everyone.  
18 Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak. My name  
19 is Sue Ziemski. I've lived in the RM of Springfield for  
20 14 years, on a piece of property that is very close to  
21 Birds Hill Park. I'm not a scientist, nor am I an expert,  
22 however, I've worked in the field of environmental  
23 sustainability for about 20 years. In the five years  
24 prior to retirement, I was the national manager of  
25 sustainability for a portfolio of about 250 commercial,

1 retail, and industrial properties in the US and Canada for  
2 a major REIT. Over the last year or so, I have attended  
3 many meetings and information sessions on the former  
4 CanWhite Sands and the new rendition of Sio Silica. I've  
5 sent in a written presentation to the CEC about this  
6 issue, but I want to speak to a few heartfelt points, and  
7 there are seven points of things that I'm most -- most  
8 concerned with.

9

10 First point, we Springfield residents do  
11 not want this company to go one step further in their  
12 operations. We want them to cease any further operation  
13 and mitigate the damages that they have already created in  
14 their quest for financial windfall at the expense of the  
15 present and future residents of southern Manitoba. We  
16 want them gone. Springfield residents were not made aware  
17 of the intentions of CanWhite, nor were we made aware that  
18 our previous mayor had consulted with CanWhite to allow  
19 them access onto RM property to investigate what was under  
20 the aquifer. Had we been made aware of this  
21 transgression, had this been done transparently, we would  
22 have voiced enough opinion to halt this from the  
23 beginning, as did the other seven neighbouring  
24 municipalities. Of note, four of our five current  
25 councillors, including our mayor, pledged to not allow Sio

1 Silica to continue. They each said no to Sio Silica  
2 operations when asked this question directly at the  
3 election forums held just prior to their election in  
4 October 22nd of last year, a scant four months ago. There  
5 was only one councillor that did not say yay or nay as he  
6 was a councillor -- was re-elected but chose not to attend  
7 the three election forums held by the grassroots  
8 organization known as Springfield Democratic Development.  
9 This group, which I am proudly a member of, has been  
10 around for in excess of a dozen years, has a mandate to  
11 make residents aware of items of concern to the future.  
12 well-being of Springfield. Again, we want Sio Silica  
13 gone.

14

15 Second point. Many concerned citizens and  
16 experts who you have heard from cannot fathom how we can  
17 possibly allow a company to drill 10,000 wells over 24  
18 years, and only analyze the impact of the first three  
19 years of operation. And use this as a basis for allowing  
20 the further continuance for 21 more years after that? You  
21 do not build a prototype of anything without proving long-  
22 term viability of the item. Analysis of the first three  
23 years out of a 24-year life does not leave anyone feeling  
24 comfortable.

25



1                   Third Point.    On the subject of 10,000  
2 wells, again, how are you going to cap them effectively so  
3 that they do not capsize or depress, so that no person,  
4 animal, or contaminant can gain access to them or into the  
5 water below for all the hundreds of years that they will  
6 remain there?

7  
8                   Point four.    Up until this weekend, Sio  
9 Silica did not have a client for the sand.    We now see  
10 from the splashy full-page ad in Saturday's paper that  
11 they now have an MOU signed with a German company.    An  
12 MOU, even if real, does not guarantee commitment.    Today,  
13 Sio Silica has spoken of the need for silica sand for  
14 solar power panels.    Until recently, silica sand was  
15 needed for fracking until it was discovered that you don't  
16 need high quality silica sand to do fracking anymore, you  
17 can use plain, brown, regular sand to do the part.    So,  
18 who is to say that solar power -- solar panel method of  
19 creating electricity will still be the preferable method  
20 in the near future?    Will silica sand still be the  
21 preferential component of solar panels?    Do we want to  
22 potentially destroy our drinking water today to build  
23 solar panels that may not be the popular or price  
24 effective solution in the near future?

25

1 Fifth point. And even if the MOU is real,  
2 why would we think that a German company is going to  
3 settle in Manitoba, employ 8,000 people who we do not have  
4 here? That would be more than half the population of the  
5 RM of Springfield alone. They would, in all likelihood,  
6 settle in Alberta, where environmental rules are more  
7 relaxed, taxes are cheaper, and there are more people  
8 available for work. What is more likely to happen if this  
9 project is not stopped, is for Sio Silica to cut into our  
10 aquifers, suck out the sand, contaminate for life, our  
11 water, to deliver the sand by rail cars to an Alberta  
12 plant. That process leaves us with a forever damaged  
13 aquifer and a handful of maybe 25 employees over 24 years.

14  
15 Point six. Dollars to doughnuts, our water  
16 will get contaminated by this method of extraction. How  
17 can Sio Silica possibly state that they can extract the  
18 sand in a slurry solution with our precious water, muck  
19 around with extracting the sand from the water, then  
20 reintroduce the leftover water back into the aquifer?  
21 Even with UV treatment, there is the possibility of  
22 contamination of the water with microbes and air. Air is  
23 everywhere, short of outer space. It's unbelievable.

24

25 Seventh point, and simply, this radical and

1       untested for safety, airlift slash mining -- water mining  
2       process should make this process a no-go. It is not  
3       proven safe.

4  
5               So, in summation, we need to save our water  
6       and save it from impurities for the countless generations  
7       that will make Canada their home. As the world warms, we  
8       will experience a vast increase in immigration to Canada.  
9       Where will those people build their new lives if we don't  
10      have the water to foster agriculture to produce the food  
11      we need, and the water we need to drink to survive?  
12      Please deny Sio Silica. Thank you.

13  
14              THE CHAIRMAN:        Chair. Thank you very  
15      much. Cathy Tymko, and Kathy will be followed by Taylor  
16      Galvin.

17  
18              SECRETARY:    Secretary. Can you state and  
19      spell your name for the record, please?

20  
21              MS. TYMKO:    Yes, Cathy Tymko -- C-A-T-H-Y  
22      T-Y-M-K-O.

23  
24              SECRETARY:    Cathy, can you place your hand  
25      on the Bible, please? Do you swear that the evidence to

1 be given by you shall be the truth, the whole truth, and  
2 nothing but the truth, so help you God?

3

4

MS. TYMKO: I do.

5

6

SECRETARY: Thank you.

7

8

MS. TYMKO: Thank you. I will not take  
9 the full then minutes because to me the issue is very,  
10 very simple. My role as the Superintendent and CEO of the  
11 Sunrise School Division is to look after the safety and  
12 well-being of the students in our schools, how the staff  
13 who work in them, and the Community members who use them.  
14 And as was stated previously, the science may not be there  
15 yet, and the plan may not be developed yet. And that  
16 quite frankly is the concerns that I'm going to bring  
17 forward.

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Sunrise School Division has looked into the  
information on the Clean Environment Commission website,  
we have had members attend the public hearings, and we  
have looked for clarifying information independently, and  
the division has identified the following very important  
concerns specific to the Sio Silica proposal. Number one,  
that there is no definitive answer about whether the

1 proposed process will negatively impact, contaminate, or  
2 destroy the existing water sources for our schools.  
3 Secondly, that there is no plan developed that addresses  
4 the responsibilities that Sio Silica will take addressing  
5 any, and all, unintended or inadvertent negative impacts,  
6 contaminations, or destruction of the existing water  
7 sources for our schools. All water for Springfield  
8 Collegiate, Springfield Middle School, Oak Bank  
9 Elementary, Hazel Ridge School, and the Oak Bank  
10 Transportation Centre is supplied by well located on site  
11 at each of those locations. Sunrise School Division well  
12 water is supplied via pump and is then treated with an  
13 ultraviolet light system to remove most forms of  
14 microbiological contamination from the water prior to  
15 reaching our water fountains and faucets. There is no  
16 information available addressing safety equipment that can  
17 be installed to combat any potential contamination as a  
18 result of the silica processing activities being proposed.  
19 Our remaining 19 schools and sites are hooked into town  
20 water supply systems that are administered and monitored  
21 by the municipality and towns in our region.  
22 Municipalities and towns all access water sources from the  
23 existing aquifers in the region and would face the same  
24 issues, even though they are not the direct responsibility  
25 of the school division itself. The proposal of Sio Silica

1 as it stands does not include assurances to protect the  
2 existing aquifers, nor does it indicate what contingencies  
3 would be in place at the outset to address any and all  
4 negative impacts the aquifers that provide water to more  
5 than 4,800 students, more than 1,000 employees of the  
6 Sunrise School Division. As such, the Sunrise School  
7 Division is speaking loudly against the approval of the  
8 Sio Silica proposal. Thank you for the time this evening.

9

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Thank you very  
11 much. Taylor Galvin, please. And Taylor will be followed  
12 by Shandy Walls. Is Taylor here? Taylor Galvin? Okay.  
13 The Commission has Taylor's PowerPoint, so it's on the  
14 record, notwithstanding that won't be giving an oral  
15 presentation. Shandy walls. And Shandy will be followed  
16 by Erin Neufeld.

17

18 SECRETARY: Secretary can you say and  
19 spell your name for the record, please?

20

21 MS. WALLS: Shandy Walls -- S-H-A-N-D-Y W-  
22 A-L-L-S.

23

24 SECRETARY: Sandy, can you place your hand  
25 in the Bible, please?

1

2

MS. WALLS: I can.

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SECRETARY: Do you swear that the evidence to be given by you shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MS. WALLS: Yes.

SECRETARY: Thank you.

MS. WALLS: Hi. I have, I think, sat in every single session that you all have done for the last two weeks and thanks for doing yet another one. I think it is important we all get our voice, and we all are heard. I was not planning on speaking. I signed up Sunday morning after sitting in the Anola open house on Saturday. It was a rough one. I really thought it was rough. I wasn't planning on speaking because I'm also self-employed. I'm a consultant. Sio Silica is one of my clients. I'm also on contract with the Springfield Chamber of Commerce as their Executive Director. I have a lot of different hats that I wear in the community. I have a 20-year-old daughter that's at the U of M, that I pay tuition for. And worse than that, I have a 19-year-

1 old son who lives in Philadelphia, goes to a private  
2 university, and I can't afford to lose any of my jobs. I  
3 need every single one of them in order to pay the crazy  
4 tuition that's required down there. That's why I didn't  
5 want to speak out. I actually have talked to a lot of my  
6 chamber members, a lot of my -- the directors on the  
7 board. Hands down, I know there are so many people in  
8 support of this project being done safely. If it can be  
9 done safely, they want it done. They don't want to have a  
10 target on their back though, by saying they support it.  
11 So, I did make the tough call on me coming out and saying,  
12 'Okay, I'll publicly speak' because it bothered me. The -  
13 - the hypocrisy of Saturday really bothered me and I  
14 realized that I need to be able to sleep at night and so,  
15 that's why I'm sharing my thoughts. So, you know, someone  
16 mentioned wells -- all of the wells. So, I was on Counsel  
17 from 2014 to 2018 as an elected official. We had the  
18 opportunity -- and I don't remember if it was 2017 or 2018  
19 -- Oak Bank had the opportunity of getting a large portion  
20 of our town on municipal water and residents came out  
21 against it. They were so upset because if they're, well,  
22 failed -- and there was a hookup fee, it would cost money,  
23 but they didn't want to spend the money. They wanted to  
24 just roll the dice and keep their wells. And it was  
25 shocking even -- you know, the Superintendent mentioned,



1       you know, that the schools in Oak Bank, they were on -- I  
2       think the middle school is probably on a water -- a boil  
3       water advisory for close to a year -- it was a long, long  
4       time -- but water is not that important when -- or the  
5       safety of the water is not that important when compared to  
6       people having to spend money to get on that municipal  
7       system. So, I found -- it's hypocritical. You know, some  
8       of the same people that are against this project -- that  
9       were against the water wells in Oak Bank, were also people  
10      that were against the aggregate industry. You know, we  
11      were working on a development plan -- a new development  
12      plan, because it had been 20 years overdue. We had tons  
13      of open houses, and it was amazing in the same meeting, I  
14      kid you not, people complaining about the aggregate  
15      industry, and then complaining about the bad conditions of  
16      our roads in Springfield. So, I don't even know how you  
17      can justify or not -- like, how can you not connect those  
18      dots? To me, it's apparent.

19

20                   We have the second largest, I think  
21      equestrian community outside of Alberta, and in  
22      Springfield, we don't have a manure management plan for  
23      that. We have a very robust agricultural industry. I'm  
24      going to assume it's not all organic and there are  
25      chemicals, and fertilizers -- all those types of things

1 that -- they're necessary, it's that -- it's that risk.  
2 But we do that.

3  
4 And you know, in -- one of the best stories  
5 was our dump. We used to have a dump on Hillside Road.  
6 It's no longer a dump, it's now a transfer station, but we  
7 just covered it up. So, all of that garbage, and  
8 contaminants are still in the ground. So, there's a lot  
9 of hypocrisy, and I do want us to take a deep breath and  
10 recognize that.

11  
12 But what really, really got me here tonight  
13 was listening to a man on Saturday turn to the Sio table  
14 and say, 'I'm coming for you, I'm going to spill your  
15 guts.' And when he was done speaking, the room applauded.  
16 And that's really why I'm here, because I think we're  
17 about more -- we're better than that.

18  
19 So, Sio involvement -- I -- I have been  
20 involved with Sio since 2020. I was asked if I would  
21 moderate a -- a open house that they were doing online.  
22 And I said, 'Well, I will, but only if you give me your  
23 entire database of every single person that's ever called  
24 or emailed with concerns, questions', because I really  
25 thought that all of this could be cleared up with better

1 communication. So, I did bring a list and I'll leave it  
2 with -- with the committee. My report from that time -- I  
3 had 47 conversations, I left 13 voicemails, three were not  
4 in service. I received four calls back. I went online  
5 and I posted information about the event with my own  
6 personal cell phone number, and I continue to do those  
7 things. My cell phone number is out there for all the  
8 world to see, because I really do believe that if people  
9 have questions, we want to give them access to the  
10 answers. Now, I'm not going to be giving the answers  
11 because I can't even follow half the science. It's --  
12 it's intense. The last two weeks have been really, really  
13 intense. But I have access to the engineers, and the  
14 hydrogeologists, and the hydrochem -- like, I can get that  
15 information. No one ever took me up on it. And in fact,  
16 I guess what I would also add in -- in one of the hearings  
17 last week, someone -- there was a proponent against us,  
18 and I believe it was our lawyer -- the Sio lawyer, that  
19 said, 'If we can do this safely, can we assume you'll  
20 approve of the project?' And the answer was 'No.' So,  
21 it's about more than just water. There is, very much, an  
22 anti -- a small anti-Sio sentiment.

23

24 I want to talk about former Counsel,  
25 because I think this is important and I actually heard

1 someone on Saturday in Anola, say that Sio Silica paid for  
2 or bought off former Counsel. Former Counsel never did  
3 Sio Silica a single favour. I had many conversations with  
4 the mayor of the time, and I can tell you that she said to  
5 me, she would not follow the science, she wasn't a fan of  
6 the project, but for personal reasons. I talked to  
7 another councillor, who's no longer a councillor, and  
8 said, 'So, if the CEC comes back positive, will we get  
9 your support' -- the RM only needs to give support on  
10 build -- a building permit. And he said 'Probably not.  
11 Farmers don't seem to like this project.' One minute.  
12 The last thing that I want to say is that the current  
13 anti-Sio sentiment -- Rusty came up and he was talking  
14 about courage, and courage is a really -- not everybody  
15 has it. You know, there are "Stop Sio Silica" signs that  
16 are driven around our RM all the time. Who knows who has  
17 them up there? The people that are doing it don't have  
18 courage to share who they are. But what I would also say  
19 last thing is 129 people showed up on Saturday -- that  
20 included the Sio people that included you all -- 129  
21 people, and 95 cars cause I counted -- but Springfield has  
22 over 16,000 people. So, 100 of them in the room didn't  
23 like the project.

24

25

THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. One of my

1 ground rules was respect for each other. I will ask the  
2 audience to hold their comments, please.

3

4 Chair. Erin Neufeld will be followed by  
5 Jocelyn Hamill.

6

7 SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state and  
8 spell your name for the record, please?

9

10 MS. NEUFELD: Erin Neufeld -- E-R-I-N N-E-U-  
11 F-E-L-D.

12

13 SECRETARY: Erin, can you place your hand  
14 on the Bible? Do you swear that the evidence to be given  
15 by you shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing  
16 but the truth, so help you God?

17

18 MS. NEUFELD: Yes, it is. Thank you.

19

20 SECRETARY: Thank you.

21

22 MS. NEUFELD: I'm going to start by saying  
23 that I am not anti-mining, I am a researcher who views all  
24 sides of the data. And as Hugh McCarkley said very well  
25 on Saturday to anyone who was at the Anola presentations,

1 'I'm anti trainwreck', and this is a trainwreck and it has  
2 been from the beginning. I will also add, before I start,  
3 that as a public historian with eight years of experience  
4 -- or eight years of education, including certifications  
5 in sustainable business strategy and ten years of research  
6 experience, history repeats itself if we do not look to  
7 our history.

8  
9 So just to repeat, my name is Erin Neufeld.  
10 For context, I'm a 30-year-old married woman who resides  
11 in Cooks Creek. I have no children by choice at the  
12 moment because my husband and I wanted to wait until we  
13 were stable in our lives. But if you ask my 86-year-old  
14 grandmother, we shouldn't even bother, because what we are  
15 leaving our grandchildren -- or her grandchildren and  
16 great grandchildren with is next to nothing if we allow  
17 projects like this to continue forward. This is becoming  
18 more of a reality if projects like this are approved.  
19 This is not simply about us, this is about our children.  
20 We are taught from grade school that everything is  
21 separate at that -- and that band-aiding problems is  
22 enough, no matter the size of problem. Most notably, we  
23 see our governments continually doing this, year after  
24 year. Today, I bring forth views that originate in  
25 Indigenous theory, as someone who has been privileged to

1 work in partnership with First Nations for seven years. I  
2 wish to challenge all of you here today and the CEC to  
3 consider this view when reviewing all of the data and  
4 knowledge being brought forth by all sources. We are  
5 small in this greater system that allows us to live within  
6 it, including the land, water, and more.

7  
8 System theory, for those who may not know,  
9 a systems theory reviews all information as a system.  
10 Visualize a spider web. Every section needs the next to  
11 ensure the system stays intact and able to withstand the  
12 elements because everything is interconnected. You cannot  
13 cut off a major section of an aquifer and not cause a  
14 systems effect, whether ten years from now, or as other  
15 presenters have said, 100 years from now. It is an  
16 aquifer system, which means causing significant, abrupt  
17 trauma to a section of the system will have a grave chain  
18 reaction over time. Nor can you remove a crucial element  
19 in a filtration system and assume the process will be fine  
20 afterwards. This ignores the crucial systems effect of  
21 our natural world and its cycles. We are ignorant to  
22 think it won't. But this ignorance is typical of natural  
23 resource extraction projects historically. I will revisit  
24 this point.

25

1                   So you may be pre-planning for a ten-year  
2                   system, but how can we predict a 20, 30, 40, so forth,  
3                   especially with use of techniques that have not been  
4                   properly and thoroughly tested to the level that they need  
5                   to be? So to go towards something that another speaker  
6                   spoke to, bias. Greed and bias in data. Studies that  
7                   have been done and paid for by the company, and by many  
8                   companies like it in the past, are sure to come with bias.  
9                   We see this historically with natural resource extraction  
10                  via hydro in our own province. History and source are  
11                  filled with bias. This is how projects like this one gain  
12                  access so easily and quickly. Bias is fed by greed.  
13                  Companies like Sio, or whatever name you will go by months  
14                  from now, these companies go for the easiest projects with  
15                  the greatest outcome, then call them green. If you truly  
16                  wanted to utilize a green project, you would be utilizing  
17                  the silica from all of the things that silica contains,  
18                  including our previous cell phones, technology, plastic  
19                  and more to ensure sustainable strategic business that  
20                  actually is green. The current work that is being done is  
21                  greenwashing. stating that a project is green, but it  
22                  truly to its core, and with use of root cause analysis, we  
23                  see that it's not. I have learned the majority of  
24                  projects fail to respect or care to use local knowledge  
25                  prior to project approvals. No individuals should be



1       judged for their lack of certifications, et cetera. So, I  
2       say this. Therefore, I call for the implementation of  
3       more local knowledge as these hearings have not allowed  
4       for the amount of local knowledge needed to make a final  
5       decision due to the lack of accessible information that  
6       has been made public. If I ask any of my neighbors, they  
7       are unaware of this. And why is that? It's the lack of  
8       accessible information on all ends.

9

10               Regarding the jobs, companies always use  
11       the number one sale of any project as jobs. The 8,000 --  
12       or maybe it's 300 jobs now depending on the article you've  
13       seen, these will not go to people in this -- these  
14       communities. As we look to hydro for examples of this  
15       with the latest in Keeyask and Quebec workers.

16

17               I have researched and worked in partnership  
18       with First Nations, as mentioned, for several years, and  
19       through my experience I've become privy to information  
20       from written and human source that may never -- that many  
21       never learn or have the chance to truly hear. I will  
22       repeat, clean energy is not clean for everyone. There is  
23       always a group sacrificed for it, and there are lies  
24       behind the word green.

25

1                   So, a comparative truth. I want to tell  
2                   you a truth that most don't know. The entirety and  
3                   ongoing battle of ongoing history in our own backyard  
4                   that, in many ways, holds similarities to this, and proves  
5                   that even when something like this is done with a company  
6                   from your own province, the promises will not be kept due  
7                   to bureaucracy and greed -- with zero care of the long-  
8                   term effects to those directly affected, and most  
9                   importantly, our water. As those affected are viewed as  
10                  sacrificed for the continual drive of greed.

11

12                  Two First Nations in northern Manitoba were  
13                  forcibly relocated in the 1960s and 1970s due to Hydro's  
14                  natural resource manipulation for our electricity. At the  
15                  time, they and several other First Nations in northern  
16                  Manitoba, were promised many things to ensure they would  
17                  have all that they originally had in their sacred land,  
18                  and all this while being manipulated through the entirety  
19                  of the process. And to this day, they are still battling  
20                  this process, 60 to 70 years. Manipulation tactics and  
21                  the failure to include transparency are all a part of what  
22                  we call divide and conquer technique utilized to divide  
23                  politicians, investors, communities, and more. With all  
24                  of the shiny things, short-term payoffs and jobs -- same  
25                  as usual. As well as the greenwashing language they

1 utilize to ensure that we think it's green -- we think  
2 it's something that they are doing a favour for us. These  
3 First Nations to this day are still in battle, as I said,  
4 attempting to gain access to the basics they were  
5 originally promised, all while having their original  
6 sacred traditional lands flooded and water bodies  
7 manipulated so we have more power than we need. Again,  
8 something we have more than we need. We need to remember,  
9 self-reflection is a crucial part of this, not only  
10 against these companies, but for ourselves.

11

12           Going back to the hydro situation, although  
13 these situations are not identical, they carry warnings of  
14 land manipulation, divide and conquer technique, the  
15 failure to recognize the environmental -- the environment  
16 around us is a system, as well as public knowledge and the  
17 issue of companies never being held accountable for the  
18 damages that cannot be reversed. Short-term payoffs are  
19 not worth destroying our land and waters for us,  
20 especially an aquifer system viewed as one of the most  
21 pristine in the world. So to end, I challenge us all to  
22 self-reflect on our use of water, whether by how you clean  
23 your house, or otherwise, and your use of material goods,  
24 because in the end, we all need to be held accountable.  
25 Thank you.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Thank you very much. Jocelyn Hamill. Jocelyn, thank you. And Jocelyn will be followed by Lorraine Boitson.

SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state and spell your name for the record, please?

MS. HAMILL: My name is Jocelyn Hamill --  
J-O-C-E-L-Y-N H-A-M-I-L-L.

SECRETARY: Jocelyn, can you put your hand on the Bible, please? Do you swear that the evidence to be given by you shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

MS. HAMILL: I do.

SECRETARY: Thank you.

MS. HAMILL: So, I'd like to thank the CEC for the opportunity to ask some questions today. For a little bit of background about myself, I am a resident of Oak Bank. I am not expert in any of the fields required to assess this complex project. And I have done some

1 research, I have read articles -- I have read articles in  
2 -- in the media, and I must say, a lot of the information  
3 was over my head and probably way over my pay grade. My  
4 objective in -- in presenting the questions I'm about to -  
5 - to present is not to get answers this evening, but  
6 rather to have them on record for consideration as the CEC  
7 moves through its evaluation of this Vivian Silica Sands  
8 project. And some of the questions may be redundant, I  
9 apologize. How many aquifers are affected? Do we know  
10 how much water is in the affected aquifers? How much  
11 water will be pulled up and returned to the aquifers?  
12 It's my understanding that there is a vote at 20 percent  
13 consumption rate if this project goes ahead. If water  
14 restriction usage becomes necessary, will Sio have to  
15 reduce or suspend their operations, or will this burden  
16 fall on the shoulders of the public? How will the water  
17 be returned to the aquifer? Is it under pressure? How  
18 frequently will the water being returned be tested? What  
19 is the most harmful substance involved in the extraction  
20 process that could contaminate the aquifer? How would  
21 contamination, for example from diesel or benzene, of the  
22 returned water be handled? If Sio is provided with a  
23 licence, how does the approval process after the initial  
24 four or five years work? How many companies in Manitoba  
25 will be processing the silica sand? How many Canadian?

1 How many North American and international companies will  
2 this and be sold to? Is the process being used in other  
3 places in the world, and if so, have the impacts been  
4 investigated? I reiterate that my purpose in asking the  
5 preceding questions is to put the issues on record and  
6 hopefully be addressed by the CEC as part of its  
7 evaluation process. Thank you for the privilege and time  
8 to speak to the meeting.

9

10 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Thank you very  
11 much. Lorraine, and after Lorraine, I think we'll take a  
12 three to five-minute standing break and then we will  
13 resume with the Right Honourable Ed Schreyer.

14

15 SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state and  
16 spell your name for the record, please?

17

18 MS. BOITSON: Lorraine Boitson -- L-O-R-R-A-  
19 I-N-E B-O-I-T-S-O-N.

20

21 SECRETARY: Lorraine, your hand is on the  
22 Bible. Do you swear that the evidence to be given by you  
23 shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the  
24 truth, so help you God?

25

1 MS. BOITSON: I do.

2

3 SECRETARY: Thank you.

4

5 MS. BOITSON: My name is Lorraine Boitson.  
6 Thank you for this opportunity to present today. A little  
7 about myself. My husband and I made Anola our home 45  
8 years ago. Over the years, we have built three homes all  
9 within two miles of each other. We have three children  
10 and five grandchildren. Our oldest daughter -- daughter's  
11 family operates a dairy farm just two miles from our home.  
12 Our middle daughter's family is half a mile from our home.  
13 She owns a hair salon located in her home and her husband  
14 is a diesel mechanic and they also run a beef operation.  
15 Our son is the youngest and he has a degree in agriculture  
16 and manages a local crop input plant, and is planning to  
17 build a home this summer, just down the road from us. My  
18 husband and I are both retired but keep busy with our beef  
19 -- beef farm, which our son is also involved in. The  
20 great thing of having our families so close is having our  
21 families so close. Being surrounded by our children and  
22 grandchildren is the best. The only downfall to this is  
23 in the event of an environmental disaster, we will all be  
24 affected. We are all concerned.

25

1                   As farmers, we operate our farmers  
2           respecting practices that promote environmental  
3           sustainability. Our lands is our living and water is a  
4           necessity. On the Vivian Sand Project website Sio Silica  
5           states, and I quote, "As a resident, you owe it to  
6           yourself to get the facts." End of quote. So, I made  
7           this my mission, not only for myself, but for my family.  
8           The website also states, and I quote, "Sio Silica knows  
9           your water is safe. Let us prove it to you. Watch and  
10          read the facts -- matter pieces over the coming months.  
11          So, when someone asks you do you think the water will be  
12          safe, you can confidently say yes." End of quote. After  
13          hours and hours of researching, reading, attending  
14          hearings, etcetera, the only thing I can confidently say  
15          is that the more I know, the less I trust this company. I  
16          can confidently say that I base this lack of trust not on  
17          hearsay, but on what I have heard with my own ears. Let  
18          me provide just a snippet of what I've learned these past  
19          few days. At the hearing held on February 27th, I picked  
20          up a small package titled "Sio Silica Company Overview".  
21          The first page contained a safety message about winter  
22          driving. It provided tips such as checking the forecast  
23          and delaying your trip if travel is not recommended, or  
24          making sure your vehicle is well maintained with snow  
25          tires, full tank of gas. It reminds us to carry a winter



1 emergency kit and to drive to conditions. All information  
2 that, living in the country for 40 plus years, I am well  
3 aware of. All information that is within my control.  
4 Lots of information that included a plan in case something  
5 happens, like having warm blankets, food, a fire starter.  
6 All great information. We should be prepared for the  
7 unknown. Yet, during Sio Silica's presentations, when  
8 questioned about things that could go wrong during their  
9 mining process, they constantly refer to their TARP,  
10 trigger action response plan, which is not developed yet  
11 but will be as they go along. They advise us to plan for  
12 an emergency but then tell us they will develop their  
13 emergency plan as they go along. Not very reassuring.  
14 Also at the same hearing, I believe within the first hour,  
15 Mr. Sander Duncanson, legal counsel for Sio Silica stated  
16 and I quote, "Room and pillar mining operations are common  
17 all around the world, including across Canada, and they  
18 are a proven and safe method to mine underground resources  
19 without causing impacts of a big open mine pit." End of  
20 quote. My first thoughts were that's good to know. So,  
21 that evening I spent hours on the Internet looking up room  
22 and pillar mining. What I found, or rather didn't find,  
23 was that the technique Sio Silica proposes to use has  
24 never been tried before, and yet, Mr. Duncanson alluded to  
25 the fact that it was a safe mining technique. My

1 observations, Sio Silica was not off to a good start. The  
2 information kept changing. There were lots of references  
3 to Stantec reports -- Stantec 2019, Stantec 2020, Stantec  
4 2021, yet the most recent, Stantec 2022, is only available  
5 in its entirety if an NDA, or a non-disclosure agreement,  
6 is signed. I heard a number of times references to NDA's.  
7 In fact, at the February 28th hearing, we returned from a  
8 45-minute lunch break only to be told that anyone that has  
9 not signed an NDA would have to leave the room for an in-  
10 camera session. So, from 1:38 to 2:20 we were asked to  
11 leave a public session. Sio states that, I quote, "Sio is  
12 committed to leaving sites in equivalent or better  
13 condition than prior to extracting." End of quote. It  
14 also states that, I quote, "Sand stays wet and contained  
15 the whole time. It won't float around in the air or pose  
16 risks to people or animals." End of quote. This all  
17 sounds wonderful, yet Sio's test sites were not left in  
18 equivalent or better condition. Piles of sand were left  
19 uncovered, airborne for months until people complained.  
20 We heard that at the session, in Anola on Saturday, and  
21 again today. My husband saw the sand piles himself and  
22 was disgusted.

23

24 At this afternoon's hearing there was a  
25 presentation by Mr. Dennis LeNeveu, who has a Bachelor of

1 Education degree, a Bachelor of Science degree, Honours in  
2 Physics and a Master of Science degree in Biophysics. He  
3 presented for around two hours and showed many slides.  
4 Just a wealth of information. When Jesse Baker, counsel  
5 for Sio Silica had the opportunity to question Mr.  
6 LeNeveu, Mr. Baker spent time attempting to discredit Mr.  
7 LeNeveu. In my years, I have learned that it is not  
8 always the letters behind the name that bear all the  
9 knowledge. Often the most reliable information is from  
10 experience. Mr. Baker also questioned Mr. LeNeveu  
11 regarding pictures in his February 2023 submission and if  
12 the photographer had permission to be on the land. Mr.  
13 Baker asked Mr. LeNeveu was the person if -- if Mr.  
14 LeNeveu was a person who took the pictures. Mr. LeNeveu  
15 did not disclose who took the pictures, knowing that over  
16 the years, the land was frequented by hikers, ATV riders,  
17 et cetera, and he -- that he was not aware of any "No  
18 Trespassing" signs. All the information Mr. LeNeveu  
19 presented, and these are items of concern?

20

21 Throughout the hearings I heard many  
22 statements from Sio that began with words like 'We don't  
23 think', 'We don't anticipate', 'We will agree to adhere to  
24 the recommendations in the future', 'We think it is more  
25 reliable', 'We believe', 'We don't foresee', 'Our

1 assumptions', et cetera. One thing I heard behind all of  
2 this is that this is a new and unproven technique, and our  
3 environment, water, and air is at risk.

4  
5 So, going back to my opening remarks, can I  
6 confidently say that my water will be safe? Heck no. Can  
7 I confidently say that I'm terrified? I -- oh sorry, I  
8 can confidently say that I'm terrified, I can confidently  
9 say that I have absolutely no trust in this company, and I  
10 can confidently say that once the damage is done, there is  
11 no going back.

12  
13 In closing, I would like to thank the  
14 people who have spent days and days of their lives to  
15 create awareness to this project. I cannot count how much  
16 time I have spent, so I cannot even imagine how much time  
17 you have all spent. Thank you to all the experts --  
18 sharing your knowledge is most appreciated. I urge people  
19 to go to the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission website  
20 and read the transcripts from the hearings. Read the  
21 Matrix Solutions Incorporated, and Arcadis Canada  
22 Incorporated reviews. I am not an engineer. I am not a  
23 geotechnical or hydrogeological expert. I'm not a  
24 geochemist. I'm a resident of Anola, I'm a mother, I'm a  
25 grandmother.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Thank you very much. We'll have a three to five-minute stand break, and I'll warn those of you that don't know me, when I say three to five minutes, I mean three to five minutes.

(OFF RECORD)

(ON RECORD)

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, Mr. Secretary, the Right Honourable Ed Schreyer is taking a seat. Let's swear him in, please, and he will be followed by Glen. Fuhl. Glen Fuhl -- I hope I got your last name right, Glen.

SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state and spell your name for the record, please?

MR. SCHREYER: My name is Ed Schreyer.

SECRETARY: Mr. Schreyer, can you put your right hand on the Bible, please? Do you swear that the evidence to begin by you shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

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MR. SCHREYER: I do.

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SECRETARY: Thank you.

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MR. SCHREYER: So, I thank the Chair

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for the opportunity to make some remarks, which really are

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in the nature of, I hope, very relevant questions that

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have not been touched upon as yet. Whether you want to

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regard them as questions or as part of my opportunity to

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speak, it's immaterial to me. I'll begin by saying that I

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feel reassured being here this afternoon and again this

13

evening, to see that democracy here in eastern Manitoba is

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alive and well. There may be controversy, but there is

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much in democracy, that is controversial from time to

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time, and there's no avoiding it. The important thing is

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to grasp -- grasp the problem by the horns and deal with

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it. Or as the late John Diefenbaker used to say, 'When

19

the going gets tough, the tough get going.'

20

21

You have a significant problem and a

22

significant dilemma facing you here in that you're being

23

asked to give your opinion on a proposal, which, on the

24

one hand, seems to hold out great promise for some very

25

substantial and positive things that could -- could

1       happen. On the other hand, you're asking to accept the  
2       risk that real and major damage might occur with respect  
3       to a -- the most vital resource of all, which is your  
4       life-sustaining water supply. Now, what to do? Reminds  
5       me of the late Mark Twain, famous American author and  
6       humourist who said once, 'Water is not for drinking.  
7       Whiskey is for drinking. Water is for fighting over.'  
8       And it looks like we may be facing another round of that,  
9       just like in the days of the Wild West.

10

11               I want to begin by suggesting that I, for  
12       one, am very impressed with the credentials of the people  
13       who are representing the proponents, and by that, I mean  
14       the senior echelons of Sio or Sio Silica. Now, in some  
15       form of vague partnership, presumably with a German  
16       company called GmbH -- GmbH whatever -- it's a limited  
17       liability company, and right off the bat, my first  
18       question is whether this is a full and real partnership,  
19       or whether they are merely, in some form of vague client-  
20       supplier purchaser arrangement with Sio, or whether in  
21       fact they are substantial partners in a joint venture?  
22       Important question. It's important to have a clear answer  
23       on that. Another question that must be asked, and it  
24       simply must be answered, is that, inasmuch as that two,  
25       three years ago, ab initio, at the outset, the intention

1 here was to establish a company that would get into the  
2 business of mining or extracting sand for the purpose of  
3 supplying the oil and gas industry in North Dakota,  
4 primarily the Bakken deposit, but elsewhere, I have no  
5 doubt. But that somehow there has been a conversion on  
6 the road to Damascus that has not been seen since the days  
7 of St. Paul that the objective now is not to provide sand  
8 for the oil and gas fracking industry, but rather, the  
9 very opposite, to provide sand for solar panels, and also  
10 eventual silicon for silicon tipped equipment -- electric  
11 vehicle batteries and the like. I, for one, am overjoyed  
12 to think that group of people, fellow Canadians, have such  
13 a well-organized entrepreneurial spirit that they're able  
14 to think in terms of world-scale operation to bring silica  
15 sand of the highest quality to industries so as to be able  
16 to make solar panels. Because the Lord knows, if we mean  
17 what we say, that the world is simply having to finally  
18 get serious about making the transition to renewable  
19 energy, alternative energy it's going to take an awful lot  
20 of solar panels -- like, thousands and thousands of acres,  
21 hard to even conceive -- of solar panels. And where is it  
22 going to come from? So, I say quite unabashedly that I  
23 was very much impressed to read, and I've read all hundred  
24 and some pages of the deposition given by the seniors --  
25 senior people from Sio Silica at your February 27th



1 hearing, and I felt reassured by their competence in their  
2 depositions and in their credentials. However, that, in  
3 itself, is not enough because now we have to see whether  
4 what they are proposing stands the test of scrutiny. I  
5 don't pretend I fully understand at all the modality of  
6 the mining method that they're going to be used -- using  
7 in situ underground. And expert as they may be, they're  
8 going to be using a method to extract a mineral from  
9 subterraneanly, in a way that, expert or not, they are  
10 basically blindfolded. And they're fully around altering  
11 and changing the dynamics of a water aquifer which is  
12 serving thousands of people right here, in this very town  
13 of Beausejour. Approximately a half a cubic foot per  
14 second that supplies this town, comes from that very  
15 aquifer which rises and gets recharged about 15 miles  
16 south of Vivian in the area of Monominto and Ross, I think  
17 it's. Now, in addition to the town, 300 and some thousand  
18 cubic metres of water supply, in addition to the town  
19 supply, there are the individual wells in the  
20 municipalities of Springfield, Brokenhead, Reynolds, et  
21 cetera, and I can't help but feel uneasy that we just  
22 don't know enough. And impressed as I am with their  
23 expertise and their credentials, I don't feel they have  
24 come close enough, nearly, in explaining precisely the  
25 modality of their operation, some of which apparently is

1 patented, or patent pending.

2

3 Now, I want to add that I have taken the  
4 time to read all 539 pages of Dr. Eva Pip's submission to  
5 the Commission. She's a homegrown product, and I want to  
6 take this opportunity to say I wonder whether we even  
7 begin to realize what an esteemed person of science she  
8 is. Unfortunately, her health prevents her from being  
9 here in person. But we shouldn't take her work -- work  
10 lightly. In addition, we heard from a Mr. LeNeveu this  
11 afternoon. All of these -- all of these submissions need  
12 to be addressed in a very clear way. I have my own  
13 questions that I'd like to ask, Mr. Chairman. One minute?  
14 And I rush to that -- these -- in addition to whether or  
15 not it is the intention in the event that the market for -  
16 - for the extracted sand for the solar panel market, does  
17 it turn sour? Do we have a guarantee -- irrevocable  
18 guarantee that that sand will not be diverted towards the  
19 use of the oil and gas fracking industry? Let's have a  
20 damn clear understanding on that point, because so much  
21 rises or falls on that point alone. And let me say in  
22 conclusion, as well, I would like to know how committed  
23 the company would be -- the senior people of the company,  
24 to the notion of trying to do their best to reduce SO2 --  
25 I mean CO2 emissions. How many pumps -- how many motors

1 to man all the pumps -- compressor pumps, water pumps in  
2 these 300 and some clusters of wells, and how many of  
3 those pumps are in the order of five, 50, 100 and 150, 200  
4 horsepower? And how many of those are diesel and how many  
5 are electric? And I don't want to hear the argument that  
6 'Oh, they have to be diesel because they're mobile.'  
7 They're not mobile in the sense of land clearing  
8 equipment. They're manning -- or servicing stationary  
9 pumps and stationary compressors, and they can all be  
10 electric. I want to see if -- if the commitment is  
11 genuine and consistent. Thank you.

12

13 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Thank you very  
14 much. Glen Fuhl.

15

16 SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state and  
17 spell your name for the record, please?

18

19 MR. FUHL: G-L-E-N F-U-H-L.

20

21 SECRETARY: Glen, do you swear that the  
22 evidence to be given by you shall be the truth, the whole  
23 truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

24

25 MR. FUHL: Yes, I do.

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SECRETARY: Thank you.

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THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. And Glen will be followed by Patrick Therrien. So, Glen, please proceed.

MR. FUHL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I, Glen Fuhl, am a Counsellor in Springfield Ward 1. I have been a Counsellor in Springfield for three terms. I would like to clarify for the record what was said on March 11th, '23, in Anola, at the CEC public hearing from a resident in Springfield that past municipal Counsel was paid to start this project. Normally, I wouldn't respond. Because this is stated under oath, nothing can be further from the truth. I have never heard of anyone taking money. I can assure you all, I have not accepted or been offered money from Sio Silica Corp. I take my job as an elected official seriously and I care about my community to have safe drinking water. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, sir. Patrick? And Patrick will be followed by Mike Sutherland. And of course, I will remind those that are giving evidence, that they are sworn in, and if they do

1 say something that is wrong, you leave yourself open to  
2 legal action.

3

4 SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state and  
5 spell your name for the record, please?

6

7 MR. THERRIEN: My name is Patrick  
8 Therrien -- P-A-T-R-I-C-K T-H-E-R-R-I-E-N.

9

10 SECRETARY: Patrick, can place your hand  
11 on the Bible, please? Do you swear that the evidence is  
12 to be given by you shall be the truth, the whole truth,  
13 and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

14

15 MR. THERRIEN: I do swear.

16

17 SECRETARY: Thank you.

18

19 MR. THERRIEN: Good evening. Again,  
20 my name is Patrick Therrien, I'm the mayor for the RM of  
21 Springfield. Thank you for giving me this moment,  
22 Commission, the Chair. I want to thank the panel of the  
23 Clean Environment Commission for their dedication to this  
24 matter.

25

1 I, as well as the other Counsel, were all  
2 elected on the 27th of October of 2022, and this is a  
3 statement agreed by Counsel on the 7th of March and posted  
4 on our website. I'll start from the very beginning. The  
5 title is "Silica Sand Extraction Project Statement from  
6 the Counsel of the Rural Municipality of Springfield."  
7 "Access to sustainable quantities and high quality  
8 groundwater for personal and domestic use -- uses is a  
9 fundamental right of citizens. Residents of the Rural  
10 Municipality of Springfield rely on the continued,  
11 unparalleled high quality and quantity of water for life  
12 and sustained economic development. The position of the  
13 Rural Municipality of Springfield is that all questions  
14 and concerns raised about the mining process and activity  
15 of Sio Silica must be addressed completely. Without all  
16 concerns being addressed, the Rural Municipality of  
17 Springfield that will not consider supporting any unproven  
18 operations that have the potential to negatively affect  
19 the environment and our groundwater resources, accidental  
20 or otherwise, within the RM and southern Manitoba.  
21 Counsel of the Rural Municipality of Springfield is  
22 committed to protecting our groundwater resource against  
23 any and all threats to the aquifer that may affect the  
24 aquifer's high purity, quality, quantity of Springfield's  
25 water." That's the end. I can leave this here for Mr.

1 Crocker, if you'd like to use this as a copy. And thank  
2 you very much panel for your time and dedication once  
3 again.

4

5 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Thank you very  
6 much. Mike Sutherland. And Mike will be followed by  
7 Nicola Hughes.

8

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yep.

10

11 SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state and  
12 spell your name for the record, please?

13

14 MR. SUTHERLAND: Mike Sutherland. M-I-  
15 K-E S-U-T-H-E-R-L-E-N-D.

16

17 SECRETARY: Mike, do you swear the  
18 evidence to be given by you shall be the truth, the whole  
19 truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

20

21 MR. SUTHERLAND: Yes, I do.

22

23 SECRETARY: Thank you.

24

25 MR. SUTHERLAND: (Speaking in

1 unidentified language). My name is Mike Sutherland, I'm  
2 from Peguis First Nation, and I'm the Director of our  
3 Consultation and Special Projects Unit, which I started  
4 building back in 2012. I built this unit because we had  
5 nobody protecting our traditional territories, our land,  
6 and our waters. And you know, some of you -- you know,  
7 what I'm going to say, you know, might be kind of -- might  
8 be kind of hard on some, but it's experience that we went  
9 through, right? And one of the things that we've learned  
10 is that we cannot count on anybody to protect us. We have  
11 to protect ourselves -- our own community. Last year, we  
12 seen the worst flood in our history. Two-hundred-year  
13 flood mark, 2,000 people evacuated. We have 11 -- we have  
14 people out since 2011, 2014, now 2022. No level of  
15 government trying to put any effort to bring us home.  
16 We're fighting for the Channels project where they're  
17 trying to divert water from Lake Manitoba to Lake St.  
18 Martin -- through Lake St. Martin and Lake Winnipeg.  
19 They'll kill that lake. And they'll kill the fishing  
20 industry, which First Nations, that's all we have left is  
21 fishing. We have -- in 1995, the Conservative government  
22 expropriated land for hog operations. From 1995 and on,  
23 to -- to 2007, but still yet up until 2009 and '10 -- 2007  
24 when Gary Doerr put a halt to spreading hog manure on the  
25 land. We've lost several hundred babies through blue baby



1 syndrome nitrates. So, we know what it is to suffer. We  
2 know what it is to go through hardships. We know what it  
3 is to be homeless. We know what it is to be displaced.  
4 In our community, when it floods, our farmers don't get  
5 compensation from the province, but yet, the Hutterites  
6 and local non-Indigenous farmers that farm our land get  
7 compensated. And you know, we went through this -- Ian  
8 Halket was here at the very first day and he said Peguis  
9 doesn't support it. You know, we -- we've had that  
10 discussion hard and long the last three weeks. Ian came  
11 to our leadership and spoke to our Chief. We spoke to our  
12 Counsel members, you know, and we've been dealing with --  
13 I started building this unit, our Consultation Unit in  
14 2012 and we worked with Gail Whalenends (ph) and her son  
15 until 2017 and we had over 30 CEC -- at the time, NEB and  
16 -- and the CER Environmental engagements -- is plus many  
17 Section 35 consultations. And you know, it is the hard  
18 decision that we have to make as we move forward, you  
19 know, and -- but we -- we look at things much differently  
20 because of the way we're impacted. We don't have  
21 opportunity like the rest of Manitobans. We don't have  
22 the opportunity to industry, to our natural resources. We  
23 have to take whatever is left, which is very minimal. Our  
24 people have been living on welfare -- and I got my first  
25 welfare check at 18, it was 111. It's still 111 today,

1       regardless of what the economy, the prices of food, gas,  
2       and everything else. So, you know, we know what hardships  
3       are. But we're not going to depend on anybody anymore.  
4       And you know, we've made a decision. It's -- it's a hard  
5       decision. Many of you here may not like it, but it's a  
6       decision that we've taken things into our own hands.  
7       We've never seen a CEC turn away a project. The National  
8       Energy Board -- now the CER, has never stopped a project.  
9       Impact Assessment Agency of Canada has never stopped a  
10      project. They're going to go through. With the decision  
11      that we made, we decided to support Sio Silica project  
12      because they offered us to be in the room -- to be the  
13      traditional environmental monitors of this project. And  
14      it's not just First Nation men and women that are going to  
15      be monitoring this project. We have four legal firms, six  
16      engineering firms that work for us, including Ian Halket.  
17      These are the people that are going to be in the room with  
18      us if the contract is drafted up, right? And I'm here to  
19      tell you today that we'll do our damndest and our due  
20      diligence to make sure that that water is protected.  
21      Because if we don't do it, and we're not in the room, we  
22      can't offer that, and I don't know who else will. We've  
23      dealt with Stantecs, Golders, and all these environmental  
24      companies all our lives, and they never go our way -- they  
25      go industry or government's way. We are the first First

1 Nation environmental firm in Manitoba -- we've trained  
2 traditional environmental monitors in the last 40 years,  
3 since we got involved with the pipeline, and we're heavily  
4 immersed in that project. We didn't want it, but we -- we  
5 got into it and were able to do what we can to protect our  
6 land and our water, and make sure we hold Enbridge's feet  
7 to the fire, and we'll do the same thing here. And we're  
8 also immersed in many hydro projects.

9

10 And I'm not coming here to make a promise  
11 because they paid us, or anything like that. I'm coming  
12 here to make a promise because we promised our own people  
13 we would protect our water and the future of Manitobans'  
14 as well. You take a look at Lake Winnipeg -- like, we're  
15 fighting, you know, and -- and I know many of you here are  
16 farmers, but that's what's impacting our lake -- nitrates,  
17 phosphates, pollutions from the city, that lake is dying,  
18 and we're fighting hard to protect our industry to protect  
19 the future of that lake, because if that lake dies, so  
20 does the rest of Manitoba and our water resources. So,  
21 we're not here to make money. We're not here to, you  
22 know, look good. We're here to protect what's life for  
23 us. To us, water is life, and they've offered us that,  
24 and we're going to take -- take them up on their -- their  
25 offer, and we'll put our team to work for -- not just for

1 our First Nations.

2

3 And you got to remember, this area of here  
4 southeastern Manitoba was our signatory Chief's  
5 playground. This is where he hunted, trapped, fished. We  
6 did a traditional land use study for Manitoba-Minnesota  
7 line. We interviewed 100 people and 100 self-mapping  
8 exercises, and we came up with 8,000 waypoints. That's  
9 how active our people are here in eastern Manitoba, from  
10 the Whiteshell, right down to the border. So, we'll do  
11 our damndest to make sure that we hold their feet to the  
12 fire, and we do what we -- needs to be done to make sure  
13 all Manitobans are aware as we monitor this whole project.  
14 Miigwech.

15

16 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Miigwech.  
17 Thank you very much. Nicola Hughes, oh, on cue, followed  
18 by Val Ralke.

19

20 SECRETARY: Secretary. Can you state and  
21 spell your name for the record, please?

22

23 MS. HUGHES: Nicola Hughes -- N-I-C-O-L-A  
24 H-U-G-H-E-S.

25

1                   SECRETARY: Ms. Hughes, do you swear that  
2 the evidence to be given by you shall be the truth, the  
3 whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

4

5                   MS. HUGHES: I do.

6

7                   SECRETARY: Thank you.

8

9                   MS. HUGHES: I am Nicola Hughes, a resident  
10 of the RPM of Springfield. My husband and I moved here,  
11 well there, in 2003 and quickly discovered that the  
12 groundwater was both a blessing and a curse. A curse  
13 because during the wet years, you have to pump it from  
14 your foundation and toward the ditch, which is often still  
15 frozen. It took us a while to manage this efficiently.  
16 We just accept that depending on the weather, there are  
17 parts of our property that are more wetland than field or  
18 woodland in certain years. The blessing is, of course,  
19 the excellent drinking water that we enjoy from our own  
20 well. We always feel sorry for people that have treated  
21 town water as it is not just as refreshing and does not  
22 taste as good. Another thing I quickly discovered as we  
23 explored the wonderful, wild countryside all around us  
24 were the signs declaring it as a water stewardship  
25 conservation area. This was very reassuring.

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A few years ago, I started to notice that these signs were no longer visible. Was this a coincidence, or were they quietly retired when a possible opportunity to make money appeared? Needless to say, when we heard that our water might be in jeopardy, we were more than a little alarmed. To this day, I cannot understand why the possibility of damaging or destroying this precious and essential-to-life resource would even be considered. It's that old saying money talks, affluent companies can get or do what they want. I hope this is not true.

Right now, in Europe, entire countries are experiencing drought. The situation has been described as very precarious. This past weekend I learned that Spain, for example, has put a limit on the amount of water that farms and individuals are allowed to draw, but allegedly not industry. Weird. A state of emergency was declared in five regions of Italy last summer, restricting drinking water until the end of the year. In comparison to most -- in comparison to most countries, we currently have an abundance of clean, fresh water. But with chemicals wafting over our lakes and rivers, and industry drawing from both these and the ground, how long will this remain

1 true?

2

3 Let's take the best-case scenario, that  
4 everything that we are being convinced of is true and our  
5 water remains contamination free. Will our groundwater  
6 levels drop below the level of average private wells,  
7 leaving homeowners, farmers and businesses without water  
8 during drought periods? I am no expert, but with so much  
9 being taken for processing, it surely must. Sio and  
10 others tell us we'll be able to help save the planet if we  
11 allow the extraction of this silica. While it is true  
12 that solar provides us with a renewable source of energy,  
13 the panels themselves, including the silica sand, must be  
14 recycled. I hear about possible manufacturing plants for  
15 panels in Manitoba, but not what we are to do with them at  
16 the end of their life cycle. As a planet, we have such a  
17 great record with recycling. In years to come, should we  
18 be burying these panels in the caverns created by the sand  
19 removal? I jest, of course. We need to think again.

20

21 Additionally, and I did not fully  
22 comprehend -- comprehend this until quite recently, there  
23 is the light pollution that will result from having a  
24 production plant operating 24/7 in our neighbourhood. I'm  
25 still reeling from the impact of the recent grain facility

1 built more than 12 kilometres from my home. Over the past  
2 20 years, I have seen our dark sky getting ever lighter.  
3 Since Parrish and Heimbecker started operation, I can no  
4 longer enjoy the stars to the west. If Sio Silica  
5 operates nine kilometres to the east, this will ruin what  
6 enjoyment I have left. Will I ever see the Northern  
7 Lights from my yard again?

8  
9 Then there is the increased noise. One  
10 thing I have never enjoyed about living where I do is the  
11 CN rail traffic. It was my biggest concern before  
12 committing to buying our house. I have never come to  
13 terms with it, finding it especially invasive during the  
14 summer months, and I'm consoled that the trains do not run  
15 too frequently. That too would change, adding noise  
16 pollution and vibrations to the overall impact. I do not  
17 yet know how noisy and disruptive the proposed drilling  
18 will be.

19  
20 Am I emotional about this topic? You bet I  
21 am. I am passionate about the area I live in. It has an  
22 abundance of wild animals, deer, bear, coyotes, skunks,  
23 fisher. The birds we see were not even on my radar until  
24 moving there, and they are wonderful. There are raptors,  
25 bald eagles, redheaded woodpeckers, orioles, warblers,



1       swifts, nighthawks, cranes, owls of many kinds. We've  
2       even spotted bluebirds, golden eagles, and scarlet  
3       tanagers. These are all at risk should a monstrous  
4       lighted structure be erected. Much of their habitat would  
5       disappear if drilling were to proceed as planned.

6  
7                       Finally, I would like to question you, the  
8       experts, that our fate seems to rest with. Should we give  
9       up our rural environment in return for tax dollars and a  
10      few local jobs? Just because we take our water for  
11      granted today, surely, we should not dismiss the value it  
12      provides and could continue to provide into the future.  
13      Thank you.

14  
15                      THE CHAIRMAN:           Chair. Thank you very  
16      much. I assume you're Val? Please proceed to take a  
17      seat.

18  
19                      SECRETARY:   Secretary. Can you state and  
20      spell your name for the record, please?

21  
22                      MS. RALKE:   My name is Valerie Ralke --  
23      V-A-L-E-R-I-E, last name Ralke -- R-A-L-K-E.

24  
25                      SECRETARY:   Valerie, can place your hand

1 on the Bible, please? Do you swear that the evidence to  
2 be given by you shall be the truth, the whole truth, and  
3 nothing but the truth, so help you God?

4

5

MS. RALKE: I sure do.

6

7

SECRETARY: Thank you.

8

9

MS. RALKE: Good evening and thank you to  
10 the province of Manitoba, the CEC Committee, Sio Silica,  
11 and all attendees this evening. I had absolutely no  
12 intention of speaking at this easy because, like so many I  
13 have spoken to, we are afraid to speak of any other  
14 opinion other than that of the group that condemns the  
15 company from entering a province and offering business or  
16 industry opportunities to its citizens. If you speak  
17 against them or in favour of support of this other entity,  
18 you'll find yourself being attacked, targeted, and lied  
19 about to such a degree that it borders on defamation,  
20 slander, harassment, and violence. The silent majority  
21 are not interested in abuse of any kind and actually, we  
22 trust the science and the regulatory agencies that are in  
23 charge. They support business, job creation, and economic  
24 development.

25

1                   Saturday morning, under oath, a citizen of  
2                   our community accused past RM Counsel of being paid off by  
3                   Sio Silica to push this project through.       These  
4                   accusations have been many for many months.    I was a  
5                   member of past Counsel in the RM of Springfield.   It was a  
6                   stab and a vicious lie.   And I only hope that no one would  
7                   actually believe this untruth.   Unfortunately, that was  
8                   not the case.   Within one minute of lunch break, I had  
9                   three people whisper in my ear, 'So how much did you get  
10                  paid?'   Another one passed me by and as I walked by, she  
11                  said, 'I didn't expect less from you.'   I live in this  
12                  community.   I was very upset, and I'm here today, too,  
13                  under oath to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing  
14                  but the truth, on the Bible, that I, nor any past Counsel,  
15                  ever received any money or any payoff of any kind from  
16                  CanWhite Sands or Sio Silica.   I can only hope that this  
17                  committee can sift through the embellishments, half-  
18                  truths, untruths from so many citizens who spoke during  
19                  these hearings.   I have absolutely no idea how you may be  
20                  able to know the truth and fact from fiction, but I only  
21                  pray that you rely on the information for -- from  
22                  presenters who have the education, and the knowledge, who  
23                  have studied and are familiar with what we are trying to  
24                  decide with these hearings.   Thankfully, the citizen has  
25                  retracted her statement and has sent documentation to the

1 CEC Committee, for which I am very thankful for, but I  
2 still know that close to 100 people in attendance on  
3 Saturday will never read or hear this statement. They  
4 will never know that they -- what they heard that day was  
5 wrong. Now I get to live my life in my community of  
6 almost 30 years with citizens wondering whether I was paid  
7 off or if I received money for something that never  
8 happened.

9

10 I understand that many are fueled by  
11 passion, by how much they care, how much they want to  
12 preserve what we have, but that does not give them the  
13 right to disregard facts, make up lies, or embellish  
14 rumors and ruin lives. I urge everyone to investigate,  
15 ask questions, and do your due diligence if you intend to  
16 speak under oath on a topic. If you feel passionate about  
17 it, do your due diligence and don't believe everything you  
18 hear. An example of which, it is common understanding  
19 that if you want to explore a mineral, it is a provincial  
20 jurisdiction, and you apply to the province for a permit.  
21 You don't go to the RM of Springfield for it. Whether it  
22 was safe -- or not -- that it is not safe is the  
23 information that was provided to show up -- this  
24 extraction process has been studied and shown to have the  
25 potential to be safe. That is our concern. If concerns

1 from our industry professionals have been presented and  
2 they need to be reviewed, then this needs to be done. No  
3 one wants water damaged, no one wants to have anything bad  
4 happen, especially Sio Silica, I would think. Is there  
5 anyone here that would actually think these individuals  
6 would want to spend millions -- millions of dollars on a  
7 project just to be proven wrong, or to damage their only  
8 possibility of an income? That would be total and  
9 complete idiocy. Comments of 'They can just leave, close  
10 up shop' is not how it works. And of course, they want to  
11 make money. That's what business is all about. We have  
12 gone through the most horrific and damaging trauma of our  
13 decade with a pandemic that literally divided people and  
14 families. Families were given the permission to attack  
15 and destroy others who did not believe the way they  
16 believed. This rhetoric is still in place. I ask the CEC  
17 Committee to only have the best interests of the whole  
18 world in mind when you make your decision. How selfish  
19 are we to tell the world that we have the potential to  
20 save and improve lives, to improve their living, to give  
21 Mother Earth a rest, because we don't believe that a new  
22 process have been -- that has been presented? This is the  
23 whole point of Sio's presenting a method that -- that is  
24 Earth-friendly. It's not a huge, massive excavation hole  
25 80 feet into the ground. It's like a port, a needle that

1 needs to be placed into your arm to take blood when a  
2 doctor needs to run tests. They will take some, they will  
3 leave lots, and then they will use what they take out to  
4 improve our very bad situation that we have put ourselves  
5 into. I can only suggest that if this project is  
6 approved, and since the province is going to receive  
7 royalties, that the province set aside a portion of that  
8 money exclusively for the what-ifs that may happen during  
9 this extraction of a 99.89 percent pure resource out of  
10 our Earth.

11

12 My neighbour in his seventies stopped me  
13 while I was walking my dog and said 'Val, I know you're  
14 not on council, but I want you to make sure you tell those  
15 who need to hear it, that most of us in this community  
16 want the silica to help -- to help the many, but we need  
17 to know that the province or Sio will find a way to fix  
18 our water. That they will not turn their backs on us if  
19 something bad happens.' I told him 'I'd do my best to  
20 pass this on,' and I guess this is maybe why I'm here  
21 today. You have to place the money in this account that  
22 cannot be used for something else or go missing. You have  
23 to prove to the citizens that you do care about this  
24 portion of Manitoba. The world is watching, and it's  
25 ready, and it's time Manitoba stepped up to the plate.

1  
2                   Sio, I hope your process works. I pray it  
3 doesn't harm anyone. I hope that you make a difference  
4 for our world at a time when we really need it. I am sad  
5 for your neighbours, and I hope they are not destroyed by  
6 too much noise, or pollution, or lights. Vivian already  
7 has two active gravel pits, and another one starting up in  
8 spring, and another one starting up down the road on 302.  
9 As isolated as is, this area is very rich in aggregate and  
10 minerals. You prove to us, Province of Manitoba and Sio  
11 Silica, to put your money where your mouth is. And you  
12 show us a plan -- a plan where you have looked at the  
13 information where every well exists currently. I know you  
14 have it, and you can get it -- that you reach out to those  
15 in the immediate area, and you offer to monitor those  
16 wells when you start your excavation. I assume that after  
17 95 wells having been dug, and with the success of drying  
18 up silica, because we know its value, that the process  
19 must work. And I can only assume that when Sio first got  
20 here, they too were rolling with the punches -- learning,  
21 expanding their understanding of what and how to process  
22 pure silica. They may not have known just how good it was  
23 until they got some out, but then when they did,  
24 understood that something unbelievable in a product so  
25 pure, and in such abundance required a whole new plan. I

1 would think that this company would be so heavily  
2 regulated, if this is approved, that they will not  
3 appreciate all the additional requirements that the  
4 province may subject and impose, but it is all for good  
5 reason to protect our people and our Earth. And yes, my  
6 well is in the very aquifer that you intend to drill into.  
7 Thank you so much for your time.

8  
9 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. Thank you very  
10 much. It is 9:01, so formally our hearing would come to  
11 an end, but we have promised Pamela Langstaff that she can  
12 have an additional ten minutes to carry on her  
13 presentation from Saturday afternoon. So, Pamela, if  
14 you'd like to come forward please?

15  
16 (LONG PAUSE)

17  
18 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. So, I'll start  
19 my ten-minute timer when I'm done my remarks here. So,  
20 we're picking up where we left off. I will caution you, I  
21 do not share your sense of humour as to what constitutes a  
22 comic relief, so, I ask you to keep it respectful please,  
23 and your ten minutes starts now.

24  
25 MS. LANGSTAFF: Don't need to swear in



1           again or anything? I don't know specifically what ---

2

3                           THE CHAIRMAN:           Chair. I will remind  
4           you, you are already sworn in.

5

6                           MS. LANGSTAFF:           I wouldn't know that  
7           because I've never been to something like this before, so.  
8           Obviously, we know why we're here. So, I'm going to  
9           answer a couple of questions. Do you know why there  
10          aren't even more people here? I was at the Anola  
11          presentation on Saturday and the unfortunate thing is the  
12          people who went to Sio's engagements only got that story.  
13          So, of course, they don't have the information, the  
14          critiques, and analysis of the other experts, including  
15          Arcadis who -- who was hired by the CEC as a technical  
16          reviewer. None of those people who have been at any  
17          public engagements -- excuse me, have the advantage of the  
18          alternative view -- that analysis, it's important. So, by  
19          design or accident, those people are lured into a false  
20          sense of security. Most other people are just leading  
21          busy lives. They think this is only going to affect  
22          Vivian, or something -- they don't know. So, having as  
23          much information out there as we can is important. Some  
24          of the experts are Arcadis, Porous Tech, as Ed Schreyer  
25          mentioned, Dr. Eva Pip.

1  
2                   So, people say, trust the science. Do you  
3 know that these people are experts, too? Do you know that  
4 the third-party reviewer that the CEC hired, Arcadis, said  
5 that Sio engaged in project splitting. Do you know what  
6 that is? That is, when you break a -- a project into such  
7 small pieces, it can't actually be understood. The full  
8 impact on the environment cannot be assessed. That is not  
9 forthcoming -- honest. So, when you say trust the facts  
10 and the science, I do -- I'm weighing this side and that  
11 side. Guess who's coming out ahead and guess who's not  
12 coming out ahead? You can put as much green on your  
13 website as you want. That doesn't make it true. And  
14 again, at -- on Saturday, I apologize if I get emotional,  
15 but this is important, this is our only source of water.  
16 The only source for approximately 100,000 people. There  
17 isn't something else. So, I won't be funny. So, my  
18 opinion, if you want a -- an informed public, CEC should  
19 do all of the Sio engagements again, everywhere, with both  
20 sides, the other experts to tell you what their analysis  
21 is. Because you know what? I can tell you, I'm not an  
22 expert, but I've read a lot of stuff, and as a layperson,  
23 I don't need to be an expert. But I know a lot of Ph.D.'s  
24 on the other side have said this is untested, unsafe, and  
25 crazy. The more I read and researched -- I read Dr. Eva

1 Pip's report, I got through the first five to ten pages,  
2 and I wanted to cry. Terms of reference for the CEC are  
3 to analyze the health and environmental impacts. So, if  
4 you're assigned to look at the environmental effect with  
5 the impact of destroying a limited and only -- only source  
6 of water, versus destroying one of multiple sources, which  
7 is still obviously bad, is that something you need to take  
8 into consideration? Context is everything. Are you going  
9 to jump off the cliff? I don't know, is it a hundred-foot  
10 cliff or a two-foot cliff, and it makes a difference?

11

12 So best practice says that you should look  
13 at this issue from a high-level and a -- or macro  
14 perspective and a detailed perspective. So, let's look at  
15 the comprehensive macro perspective. You know what, it  
16 would be great if this was coming forward with everyone,  
17 all the experts saying this is going to be a great  
18 project, there's no risk. That is absolutely not what's  
19 happening -- not what's happening. Decisions should be  
20 made on facts. So, before we go on, let's just get some  
21 consensus. Here's my reality, I hope you're in the same  
22 reality. Indisputable facts. We're on the planet Earth.  
23 It's 2023. The planet is experiencing a climate crisis  
24 driven by human activities. Alberta is the most polluted  
25 and polluting province in Canada. Do we want Alberta's

1 poor attention to, and respect of the environment and  
2 water, to be exported to Manitoba with a project like  
3 this? Manitoba does have its own problems. We get an A  
4 only on water withdrawals. By the way, this was kind of  
5 misunderstood on Saturday I understand, so. Mining is  
6 known for its negative impact on the environment. Silica  
7 sand mining is causing a global environmental crisis.  
8 Why? Because we're running out of it. So, what do you  
9 need to do? You look -- need to look at this differently.  
10 Someone mentioned recycling. If you really cared, that's  
11 what you'd be doing. Water is essential to life. You  
12 know what? It's not everyone's just saying that -- it's  
13 not just community groups being hysterical, and they're  
14 not. Do you know who says that? The province says that  
15 in their "Water Management Strategy". Water is life. It  
16 is necessary for the survival of all living organisms on  
17 Earth. Despite how valuable water is to humans, we often  
18 take it for granted. You think Manitoba has lots of  
19 water? It doesn't. Manitoba -- the province is facing  
20 water scarcity in some regions where water supply no  
21 longer meets demand. Manitoba's population is already  
22 expected to grow -- we're on the way there, we're past  
23 2020 -- 360,000 residents, 26 percent higher. Without a  
24 concerted effort, there's an increasing risk that  
25 available water supplies will not meet this growing

1 demand. In addition, during times of severe drought, the  
2 amount of water available for human use decreases. Guess  
3 what's coming? Drought. Manitoba's "Water Management  
4 Strategy" states "Climate change is expected to make  
5 extreme heat and drought-driven water shortages more  
6 frequent and severe. It will exacerbate the frequency and  
7 severity of extreme events." Who's predicted to be  
8 affected most by that. It's the prairies. How do I know  
9 that? I didn't figure it out, I went on to the province's  
10 drought management strategy. In the 20th century,  
11 billions of dollars of damages have occurred as a result  
12 of droughts across the Canadian prairies. The economic  
13 losses caused by severe drought make drought one of  
14 Canada's most costly hazards. The most severe and  
15 widespread droughts occur on the prairies, and they will  
16 diminish groundwater supplies. Don't assume this is going  
17 to be okay. And remember, the other scientists have a far  
18 different opinion from Sio. Drought is actually certain.  
19 Did you know that when the prairies were settled, it was  
20 actually a wet -- wetter two centuries? Do you know that  
21 the 30s -- the Dirty Thirties, where there were droughts  
22 for a decade -- that's to be expected. That's where we're  
23 going. Who is southeastern Manitoba? RM of Brokenhead,  
24 Brokenhead 4 Reserve, RM of Hanover, LaBroquerie,  
25 Reynolds, Ste. Anne's, St. Clements, Tache, Steinbach --

1 population 100,000 people. Do you imagine all the value  
2 of the existing residential assets in all these  
3 communities?

4

5 And I apologized on Saturday for  
6 Springfield not being part of the Municipal Silica Sand  
7 Advisory Committee, which is all of those groups getting  
8 together to get experts. What did their experts say?  
9 It's great, go ahead? No, that's not what was said. Not  
10 at all. So, this is as far as I got on Saturday and when  
11 I'm done here, I'm going to go out in the front, or in the  
12 parking lot and I'm going to keep talking, and if you want  
13 to come and find out more, I can give you some details on  
14 other things, because this is not an opportunity to cover  
15 everything. So, basically you're going to allow a for-  
16 profit company -- no one here is a volunteer, in an  
17 industry already known for its disastrous environmental  
18 impacts, use our only source of water -- limited,  
19 priceless water, not my idea -- the province knows this --  
20 necessary for life, and required by already existing  
21 residents and businesses, to extract something less  
22 valuable, sand, for their own profiteering processes?  
23 They're not here as volunteers. They're here to make  
24 money. It's a for-profit company. Does anyone want to  
25 trade me your kids for a new vehicle? Unless you have

1 adolescents, probably no. Well, I wanted to get some more  
2 good examples of rip-offs and I didn't come up with them.  
3 But anyway.

4 THE CHAIRMAN: Chair. So, that is 11  
5 minutes. I've given you a little extra, so we will draw  
6 to a conclusion.

7

8 MS. LANGSTAFF: Okay. So, (inaudible)

9 ---

10

11 THE CHAIRMAN: I want to -- I want to  
12 thank all of you for coming out this evening. I  
13 appreciate you taking the time to listen and to share your  
14 views. We are adjourned for the evening. The Commission  
15 and -- we will be leaving. If you wish to stay and listen  
16 to Ms. Langstaff, that is certainly within your right to  
17 do so. Good evening, all.

18

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AFFIDAVIT OF COURT TRANSCRIBER UNDER SECTION 31 OF THE  
EVIDENCE ACT

---

I, Katryna Chalapenko, Court Transcriber, HEREBY MAKE OATH AND SAY, that the foregoing typewritten pages contain a true and correct transcription of the recorded proceedings provided herein to the best of my knowledge, skill and ability.



Court Transcriber  
March 13, 2023