

Dear Commissioners,

Please register my objection to the Vivian Silica Sand Extraction Project.

The information available about this proposed project does not allow for a comprehensive environmental review for licensing. This is evident from the omissions and material deficiencies listed in the motions filed by Participants. To grant an Environment Act License to this project is not in the public interest. I am writing to you to highlight the following specific concerns.

First, the EA process allowed for separate assessment of the processing facility and the sand extraction project. It also addresses only a short 4-year period out of the 24-year life of the project. "Project splitting" is highly criticized as it prevents full assessment of all environmental, economic, and social risks and impacts from a project.

Second, the mining, processing, and transport operations will operate 24/7/365 within 100's of meters of many homes in the area. Potential for noise and air quality impacts have not been adequately assessed, and assessment of artificial light pollution has been ignored.

Third, the extraction will have direct impacts on the land. Trees will need clearing and loss of habitat will impact known species at risk. Wildlife will be disturbed by round the clock noise, which can result in negative impacts to the local ecosystem. Access roads are required for the heavy machinery and truck traffic, impacting farm land and livestock. Mining operations will create continual distress and worry, will impinge on the enjoyment of our property, and can negatively impact our livelihoods and communities.

Fourth, tens of thousands of industrial sized double cased wells will be drilled and abandoned. The casings and sealing compounds degrade over time. These wells will be perpetual sources for groundwater contamination. These wells will be on private property and will impact our property values, use, insurance, liabilities, and future development.

Fifth, the effects of removing 1.36 million tonnes of silica sand per year from the aquifer was not assessed. There are significant concerns about subsidence and sinkholes developing as a result. Potential hydrogeological impacts from subsurface geotechnical failures of the shale aquitard were also not assessed.

Sixth, sterilization of injected process water into the aquifer is a major component pivotal to the project that should have been thoroughly proven prior to beginning the licensing process. It "remains at a conceptual stage" with no sufficient information available. This is a serious flaw in the project that is particularly distressing given the need to protect local and regional groundwater resources. This gives us as area residents no certainty that our water will remain safe.

Water is our most precious resource. The Carbonate and Sandstone aquifers are valued and should not be put at risk from the proposed project. These freshwater aquifers are critical drinking water source for southern and Interlake regions and must be protected.

I urge the Commission to strongly recommend denying the licensing of the project.

Sincerely,

Gail Dufhak


GAIL DUFHAK
