

EXHIBIT NO. H-022  
File Name: Gary Dyck, Mervyn

Date: 3-6-2027 (March)

Received by: Peter Crown  
(Commission Secretary)

As the executive director of Mennonite Heritage Village (MHV) I have had the privilege of being able to listen in on this Clean Environment Commission Hearing from time to time that has been happening at our museum. I heard a significant amount of scientific study and presentations for and against this project. I'm not sure how well we listened to each other, but as I listened, I reflected on how most of us take clean water for granted. There is so much in life that is now automated and controlled by us humans that these days that we often lose sight of the value of the resources we receive and use.

Historically, Mennonites have always had a close connection with water. Whether it be learning to develop dykes in the lowlands of Holland, the swamps of the Vistula Delta (modern day Poland), or making use of the rivers of Imperial Russia. When Mennonite settlers arrived in Manitoba and Latin America one of their most vital needs was to find and establish a good source of water. They needed it for drinking (no bottled water in the stores in then), cooking, washing, fire control (wood barns with hay caught on fire easily), animal watering, and even for recreation (ponds and rivers made great swimming holes in summer and skating rinks in winter). However, it was not as abundant and easy to access for some.

For those that settled in the Rosenort/Morris/Niverville areas the aquifers were contaminated by brine deposits lower down and they had to rely on rainwater, river ice, and melted snow. We learned that not all water is readily useable. I'm sure many were thinking of leaving Manitoba. Fortunately, they could get water from the Métis, who hauled it long distances from the rivers with their ox carts. Eventually, deeper wells were established (thanks to new businesses like Friesen Drillers) and safe water supplies were found. We could stay and live a good life.

In Canada, Mexico, and other areas where Mennonite reside a safe and clean water supply in become increasingly strained. Today our houses are more numerous, our animal barns much fuller, and our precipitation less predictable. Let's not add to the risk that our precious aquifers are already dealing with. More and more, there are less places with such a good supply of potable water as we have in south-east Manitoba. Although it easily..

comes to us hot and cold through pipes in our grounds, let us never forget our reliance on clean water for daily survival.

Finally, the past year I have talked to people across the Mennonite community in south-eastern Manitoba about this silica extraction project - not one is for it. I have heard a lot of apprehension. If this project goes ahead and years, even decades later, we lose our safe water because of it, we will endure and suffer the hardships that come from it, but we will also hold accountable this generation for what they allowed and decided.

  
Gary Dyck  
Executive Director, Mennonite Heritage Village,  
Steinbach, Manitoba