

Greg McIvor, Presentation on Bill 46: Save Lake Winnipeg Act, June 13, 2011

I don't know if all of you guys, any of you, recognize me from the hog barn moratorium a couple years ago, but I think some of that is worth repeating, that, you know, some of this legislation or this act that you're introducing is another shot at the hog farmers, the agricultural producers.

You know, this act that you're putting forward couldn't come at a worse time. I think this government had an option to look at the 50-year licence on CRD first, Churchill River Diversion, 50-year licence on the Lake Winnipeg regulation, and also the 50-year licence renewals on the Grand Rapids Generating Station because, you know, what you're putting forward right now, like many of the presenters before me have indicated, that it's only halfway. It's not even going to get you past the 50-yard line in terms of achieving what you're planning on or saying you're going to accomplish. You know, pointing fingers at the City of Winnipeg on nitrogen removal. I mean, it's not going to make any difference, because, you know, as the fellow said from the Green Party, that, you know, the David Suzuki video shows that unless you regulate the water in a manner that is going to respect all of the other issues that you've put forward in this act, you're not going to accomplish half of what you guys have put forward.

You know, when you look at the system that we're currently dealing with now, the flooding in the south, like, we've lost half of our agricultural lands to flooding. We've got First Nations communities that are completely washed out, you know, and you have your deputy ministers sitting there giving them ultimatums; if you want us to do this, you've got to give us easements on your land, you've got to allow us to cut channels on the east end of Lake St. Martin. I mean, you've got all these issues that the—you're putting forward and it's all related to water management.

You have to look at a water management regime that will bring the system in Manitoba down to closer to a more natural level. Because right now, you have three major regulated lakes: South Indian Lake, as part of the Churchill River diversion, you have Lake Winnipeg regulation and you have the Cedar Lake reservoir. Your utility is also counting the electricity capacities available to them in Lake of the Woods because it's a regulated lake. They count the electricity capacity in Lake Manitoba because it's a regulated lake.

You know, with the waters being so high on Lake Winnipeg right now, you know, we had to advise your Aboriginal Affairs Minister in May that, you know, Jenpeg's gates should be open. They should be wide open. There were two gates closed. You know, your utility was taking advantage of these poor folks in the south that were facing all this flooding when that may have minimized some of the impacts on some of the communities.

The process of environmental assessments for all these projects, that I mentioned earlier, should have been done 10 years after each of those projects, but Lake Winnipeg

regulation has been on interim licence for 38 years. Maybe in this act you should put a definition on what interim means. Same thing with the CRD, 36 years.

It's not good enough for Hydro to regulate all this water and then point their finger up in the sky and say it's an act of God. You know, when you're managing this system and you're not managing it well, you know, when you got your Portage Diversion pumping twice as much as it should, Fairford control structure not being able to manage what it has, all the overland flooding that's occurring in the Interlake, you know, the overland flooding in the Interlake area, the northeast side of Lake Winnipeg and in the north.

We have information that shows that that overland flooding, when it starts to drain, the impact and the contributions to greenhouse gases is 60 times higher than operating a Lake Winnipeg regulation project or a Cedar Lake. And just in the Interlake alone, there's 33,000 kilometres that are either directly or indirectly affected. Just on the northeast side, one area that we measured, there's over 14,000 kilometres that's either directly or indirectly affected.

Now, I got nothing against, the research consortium and what they do, but measuring the water on the lake when all the contributing factors are coming overland, off the land, through the bush, into the lake through the rivers, I mean, they should be extending that research inland as well, on either side of these reservoirs.

You don't have to be a scientist to understand that when your bowl is full, there's no place to put water, and when your jug is full, there's no place to put water. Where does it go? Well, you're seeing it. You're seeing it in southern Manitoba.

I mean, we suffered this for 40 years already, flooding every year. You know, there's 16 First Nations in the south that are going through that right now. I mean the municipalities that are experiencing this—I mean Brandon's—you know, their sandbags are up to 12 feet high.

They call it a one-in-300-year flood, but this flood happened in 1955, same level, and the benefit for a lot of the people in the south is that they've had 100 years to build up their lands and their homes and ring dikes around their communities. And what are we left with? Well, if you guys give us more easements on the riverbanks, then maybe we'll, look after your emergency needs. If you let us cut channels or if you let us move further north to cut channels then, you know, maybe we'll give you this, you know, and I think Gaile is right when she says you guys are approaching right now in the south a lot of risk regarding the Crown utility, because it's artificial flooding. And you've exacerbated that flooding in the south simply because the unwillingness of this government to look at manageable levels on the lake.

The amount of water moving in Lake Winnipeg could still operate your facilities even at 712 and a half on Lake Winnipeg. Hydro has on their website a range between 708 and 718. The optimal level that they've identified is a six-foot range. Well, what's optimal about that? The high range is optimal for Hydro, the low range is optimal for probably

tourism, cottage development, cottage owners, swimming. Those are the differences in what you guys are putting forward in terms of the utility maximizing their resources, their revenues.

Now you might not want to add more projects to that in the north along with your Bipole III. When you have a capacity in the south for 8,100 megawatts of wind energy. If you look at the capacity of wind energy and your capacity of run-of-the-river projects right now, even if you reduce that capacity by 500 and took Brandon and Selkirk out of the mix, you would still have an estimated 4,500 megawatts. You could firm up, you know, another 2,500 megawatts of wind energy with that and still maintain your export sales, reduce costs to Manitobans, because that 2.9 cents a kilowatt that you dump in the States in the summertime can be converted back to savings for Manitoba, for us, as users of the electricity, the utility.

You can convert Brandon coal-burning generating station; use that to clean up a lot of the mess off the farms. Because you've got gas and coal: convert it to a biomass. Clean up some of that stuff that you guys are talking about. That would assist with what we're doing in terms of agricultural management or hog farm management. I don't think that our environment should come down to us versus them or what's the best price on the market. You know, pretty soon, to become a hog farmer, you'd have to be like the Chipmans and be able to afford a hockey team, and not very many people can do that. It's the same thing as farming: pretty soon, you're going to have to look at an elite group of people that are the only ones that can afford to do that.

You know, and you're losing half of our lands and you're looking at the issues of saturation, ground saturation, high water tables. I mean, all of these can be, you know, minimized by reducing the water on Lake Winnipeg, thus allowing us to reduce water on Lake Manitoba, plus the Winnipeg River systems. We can accomplish all of those if we look at what is really contributing to the demise of Lake Winnipeg, and it's not just the farmers in the south or the hog barns or city of Winnipeg. When you have a system that is an integrated power system that relies on maximum volumes of water in the lake so that they can be assured that they can maximize their revenue every year. And right now, the water levels, right now, are going to add an extra \$400 million to those coffers.

So instead of \$2 billion, they'll make \$2.4 billion this year, and they'll do it again next year because right now we're predicting that the water levels are not going to recede until at least the winter, only because it's going to freeze. But then it's going to melt again and you're going to end up in the same position.

But I think if we took proactive measures and looked at a more manageable system, which we can do because you got five large reservoirs and you got certain amounts of precipitation that are going to come every year, just like they have in the past. The cycle is not going to be 10 and 20 years. It's going to be, you know, five and seven years, and you've seen good examples of that in the last five or seven years.

So I just wanted to bring those issues to this table because we can do this. We can manage the lake. We can save it and we can reduce the amount of eutrophication, the amount of algae blooms that are on there because all we're doing is moving everything into the Hudson Bay. And I think that glacial paste that somebody referred to earlier is going to speed up because I think everybody knows that, the ice is melting a lot faster and the oceans are going to rise and the climate is going to change and we're contributing more greenhouse gas in Manitoba than people care to take notice of or care to measure. And it's not just confined to the regulation of the three major reservoirs.

There's a lot more area that hasn't been measured, that for some reason won't be measured, but we can show you where it can be measured and there's people that can do it. And I think if we take a more proactive position on all of this stuff, we can save our agricultural industry, our hog farm operation. I think we got to quit taking half measures and look at the whole picture, and let's do a licensing first before you introduce any acts like this. Because if you do the licensing first, I think you'll find you'll get better results in terms of proposing legislation that you got right now on the table, and I think that's something that has been mentioned by previous presenters as well.