

Manitoba Wildlands

2011 Provincial Election Questionnaire #3 – Hydro & Energy

Thank you for your correspondence regarding Manitoba Hydro and its role in helping provide sustainable and green energy for all Manitobans. The NDP has a strong record of building Manitoba Hydro for the future, and developing clean energy for Manitoba families and businesses:

- We are building Bipole III and power converters, which will ensure Manitoba's long-term power reliability, which is needed to heat our homes and grow our economy. It will also help grow our export sales – sales that keep rates for Manitoba families the lowest in North America, all the while displacing coal burning in US states and helping Americans reduce their reliance on dirty energy.
- We are building Wuskwatim, where construction is already well underway and will be complete soon. So far, over 5,000 people have been hired on the project, 40% of whom are Aboriginal.
- And we are building Keeyask, which will provide 10,500 person years of employment, and which is made necessary by \$4 billion in power sales to be made to Minnesota and Wisconsin.

If re-elected, we have committed to helping Manitoba Hydro create thousands of jobs for Manitobans by establishing the Manitoba Energy Jobs Fund, a \$30 million fund to provide low interest loans to companies that manufacture parts for hydro dams, electrical transmission, and alternative energy to help them expand and hire. A new Energy Opportunities Office will also promote local expansion and new investment opportunities in Manitoba's growing clean energy economy. Further, we will dedicate \$5 million annually toward hydro training to ensure that Manitoba workers are ready to take advantage of new job opportunities, with a special focus on training for northern and Aboriginal communities.

In contrast, Hugh McFadyen's Conservatives failed to build new hydro generation or major transmission lines, or to sign any new hydro export deals when they were in power. McFadyen can't be trusted to protect Manitoba Hydro from privatization. He was Gary Filmon's senior advisor when MTS was privatized, and he helped the Mike Harris government privatize the Ontario hydro system – sending rates soaring. More recently, McFadyen recruited a star candidate who supports privatizing Manitoba Public Insurance, which would mean higher rates for Manitoba families.

Manitoba Hydro has played a vital role in helping Manitobans become more energy efficient – conserving our energy and keeping more money in the pockets of Manitobans. The Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance ranks Manitoba first in Canada, with an A+ grade. In 1999, we scored C+. Last year alone, Power Smart programs saved close to 2 million kilowatts hours of electricity and 58 million cubic meters of natural gas – preventing over 1.25 million tonnes of GHGs. Since 1999, Manitoba Hydro has launched over 30 new Power Smart programs, and saved over 440 MW of electricity - more than two Wuskwatim hydro dams. Let's not forget that Hugh McFadyen has argued that Manitoba Hydro should get out of the energy conservation business altogether.

If re-elected, we have committed to helping cut utility bills for families by making homes more efficient. Specifically, we will:

- Offer Manitoba families up to \$1000 to support energy efficiency home improvements by topping-up the federal government's successful ecoENERGY program. For every \$100 in federal ecoENERGY grants awarded, an additional \$20 will be provided by Manitoba Hydro.
- Cut the cost of a home energy audit. These audits help homeowners choose the improvements that will save the most energy and the most money. We will cut the cost of these audits to only \$45 dollars.
- Lower the interest rate on Manitoba Hydro's popular Power Smart loan program. Manitoba Hydro's popular Residential Power Smart loan program, which offers convenient on-bill financing, has already helped more than 58,000 families invest over \$230 million in energy efficient home upgrades. The loan program will be enhanced by lowering the interest rate from 4.9 per cent to 3.9 per cent.

We have been taking concrete steps to put an end to coal use in Manitoba. Burning coal generates the highest level of greenhouse gas emissions compared to other fossil fuels. Our legislation to phase down the Brandon generating station came into effect January 1, 2010. It has been shut down except to support operations in the event of a drought or other emergency situations. The shut down reduces greenhouse gas emissions in Manitoba by an average of 200,000 tonnes per year. We have already taken action to reduce coal use in our province with the conversion of the Selkirk Generating Station to natural gas in 2002. This reduced greenhouse gas emissions by an average 100,000 tonnes/year. Beginning in 2014, coal used for space and water heating will be banned in Manitoba. Starting on January 1, 2012, coal used in Manitoba will be subject to a new Emissions Tax equal to \$10 per tonne of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions.

We have been expanding alternative energy use in Manitoba. Geothermal heat pumps eliminate the need for natural gas and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of five tonnes per home per year. Manitoba is considered a national leader in terms of geothermal use. We provide significant tax credits for the installation of geothermal heating systems. In our last budget we increased the Green Energy Equipment Tax Credit for geothermal heating systems from 10 per cent to 15 per cent. Budget 2011 also expanded the sales tax exemption on straw pellets used for heating or cooking to include biomass materials. And at a time when wind projects have been scaled back or cancelled around the world as a result of the recession and credit crunch, we have broken ground on Manitoba's largest wind farm - a 138MW wind farm at St Joseph. All 60 turbines are now fully-operational.

Manitoba has also become the first jurisdiction in the country to implement a biodiesel mandate. As a result of the two per cent biodiesel blend with diesel, it is expected greenhouse-gas emissions will be reduced by 56,000 tonnes.

We remain committed to building and protecting Manitoba Hydro, as well as further expansions of alternative energy in Manitoba.