

**Richard 'Dik' Coates**

780 Scotland Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3M 1X6

January 21, 2021

Ministry of Conservation and Climate  
Room 344 Legislative Building  
450 Broadway Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3C 0V8

**Attn:** Hon. Sarah Guillemard

**Re: Proposed Augmented Flow Program for the Churchill River Diversion by Manitoba Hydro**

Dear Ms. Guillemard

Approximately two weeks ago I received an eMail petition regarding the subject. I signed this petition and forwarded it on to the source. I was surprised that Manitoba Hydro ('Hydro') was proposing to continue with the flooding of South Indian Lake. This, personally, is a sensitive issue. 'Engineering gone wrong' is when a major engineering project fails to properly accommodate effects, both short term and long term, that the project has on the socio-economic, the environment and the natural resources of the project area. The original flooding of South Indian Lake was my first exposure to 'engineering gone wrong', and I was greatly disappointed with the lack of care and judgement shown by the profession. It is because of the initial devastation of South Indian Lake that I do not wear the traditional engineer's 'iron ring'.

Further, the Augmented Flow Program was not part of the project that I, and others, submitted briefs for. It was not part of the Churchill River Diversion proposed plan as originally submitted publicly. I'm writing this as a concerned resident of the Province of Manitoba ('Manitoba'), and not in my capacity as an engineer.

At the time, hearings were held by Manitoba regarding the proposed flooding. I submitted a brief to those hearings; this was approximately fifty years ago. The general consensus of the people submitting briefs, at the time, was that Manitoba was going to proceed with the Hydro proposal to flood South Indian Lake, and that the hearings were a mere formality. Minutes of the original hearing should be available in the provincial archives and these should be made available to the public. The minutes should reflect some of the concerns expressed, at the time.

It is my understanding that many of the harms described in the original hearings have come to fruition. The surrounding communities have experienced an increase in delinquency, crime, unemployment, alcoholism, drug use, and family breakdown. I have no means of confirming this, but records of various government agencies, such as the Vital Statistics Agency, CAS, police, census data, etc. should be available for review. The records can confirm this breakdown of the family units and the community. It is, also, possible that studies were

## **Richard 'Dik' Coates**

780 Scotland Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3M 1X6

undertaken to determine the social impact of the original flooding of South Indian Lake. There is also a strong likelihood, however, that studies were not undertaken because the studies would not be in the interests of either Manitoba or Hydro. There is a real conflict of interest with the Manitoba reviewing the Hydro proposal.

Manitoba should recuse themselves from any approval process; Hydro, is a crown corporation and Manitoba profits from this relationship regardless of the success of their projects. The main reason is that Manitoba has a vested financial interest in the outcome of Hydro's actions. A review and adjudication of the Hydro proposal should be undertaken by a disinterested third party. As a side note, it is interesting that Manitoba is prepared to further disrupt the communities affected, by flooding the area, with one of the effects being able to sell hydro power for the benefit of the United States. If Manitoba refuses to recuse themselves from the decision to grant Hydro permission for Hydro's Augmented Flow Program, the communities affected should seek a remedy through the Canadian court system.

The consequences of the proposed flooding are damaging to the communities involved. For this reason, the communities have formed 'groups' of interested residents that are in opposition to Hydro's flooding of the area. If Hydro's proposal is not stopped, the communities should seek relief from other sources outside those affected in the decision process. There are several methods to accomplish this. Initially, the communities should seek intervention by the Federal Government of Canada. The federal government, of late, has taken both an interest and a positive action with respect to aboriginal issues. The federal government's assistance in halting the proposed flooding would be greatly welcomed and appreciated by the communities.

If the federal government fails to act on behalf of the indigenous people of the area, then international agencies should be contacted to see if they can intervene to stop Hydro's flooding and disruption to the aboriginal communities of the area. The United Nations and the International Court of Justice have occasionally, and recently, interceded on behalf of aboriginal peoples suffering at the hands of their government. Canada is a signatory state for both these agencies. This is clearly a matter of government trying to interfere with the rights and livelihood of the aboriginal people. Bringing the proposed flooding to the international venue will be an international embarrassment not only to Manitoba, but also to Canada. The appearance of Canada and Manitoba on the 'world stage' may be a strong incentive for all parties 'to do the right thing'. Canada is still reeling from the UN's refusal to provide a seat on the Security Council last year; in votes received, Canada was behind, both Norway and Ireland.

In addition to the above, there are additional actions to be taken that could provide relief to the communities affected.

While the extra-provincial challenges are being undertaken, the communities can 'reach out' on social media to inform and activate other people that might be interested, or might become interested. There are numerous social media websites that would welcome this activity. Like myself, there may be a large number of people that are unaware of the proposed Hydro actions. If I had not received the eMail petition notice, I would not be undertaking this action myself. If financial assistance is required to stop the proposed flooding, crowdfunding can be considered as a source of revenue, using sites similar to 'GoFundMe'. There are, also, a few websites that offer this convenience. The added funding can be a source of revenue for legal challenges, and for advertising in the media. Consideration could also be made to retain a public relations

**Richard 'Dik' Coates**

780 Scotland Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3M 1X6

agency. The added exposure will, at the same time, likely increase general public awareness. A consequence of this is that as more people become aware of this, the news agencies will take a more active interest and, hopefully, a more active role.

A recent article arrived in my eMail from 'News Media Services' of Manitoba and part of the headline included a statement attributed to yourself, "Protecting the Environment Remains the Priority: Guillemard." I trust you will look into this matter and render an informed and proper decision.

The application by Hydro must be declined. Not only must the current program be stopped, but also an alternative must be prepared by Hydro so that future work does not include the Augmented Flow Program or a similar program.

Please forward any response to all parties listed below.

Yours truly,



Dik Coates, P.Eng.

Cc: Leslie Dysart, CEO of the Community Association of South Indian Lake  
Shirley Ducharme, Chief of O-Pipon-Na-Piwin/South Indian Lake  
Dr. Ramona Neckoway & the Waniskatan Steering Committee  
Grand Chief Arlen Dumas, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
Grand Chief Garrison Settee, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO)  
Wab Kinew, Leader of the Manitoba New Democratic Party  
James Beddome, Leader of the Manitoba Green Party  
The Honourable Brian Palliser, Premier of Manitoba  
Hon. Eileen Clarke-Agassiz, Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations  
Christina McDonald - Chair MB Steering Committee  
Dougald Lamont, Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party  
Jim Carr, MP Winnipeg South Centre  
Winnipeg Free Press  
Toronto Globe and Mail