

Minister of the Environment



Ministre de l'Environnement

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H3

MAY 21 2004

Ms. Gaile Whelan Enns
Director
Manitoba Wildlands
Canadian Nature Federation
412 - 63 Albert Street
Winnipeg MB R3B 1G4

Dear Ms. Whelan Enns:

Thank you for your letters of January 28 and February 23, concerning the provincial review of the proposed Wuskwatim hydro-electric projects in Manitoba.

As you know, the Government of Manitoba is conducting an environmental assessment of the Wuskwatim projects. Under the *Canada - Manitoba Agreement on Environmental Assessment Cooperation*, federal officials responsible for completing the federal environmental assessment have been cooperating through Manitoba's assessment and licencing process. I understand that the Clean Environment Commission's interrogatories and hearings referenced in your letter are part of the provincial process. However, as the projects have not been referred to a review panel under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, the hearings currently being conducted by the Clean Environment Commission are not part of the cooperative environmental assessment.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is currently preparing a comprehensive study report regarding the Wuskwatim Generation Project pursuant to the Act. As members of the technical advisory committee for the cooperative environmental assessment, officials of Environment Canada have provided comments on the environmental assessment reports prepared by the proponents. Environment Canada officials will also provide input to the final comprehensive study report.

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I expect to receive Fisheries and Oceans Canada's comprehensive study report in the near future. In accordance with section 22 of the Act, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency will ensure that the comprehensive study report is made available for public comment. Following a thorough review of the comprehensive study report and comments received from the public, I will make a determination as to whether to refer the Wuskwatim Generation Project to a review panel under section 29 of the Act. Given that the environmental assessment of the project is ongoing, it would be inappropriate for me to intervene in this matter at this time.

For your convenience, I have sent a copy of this reply to my colleagues to whom you also addressed your concerns. As well, I have forwarded your questions to my departmental officials for a direct reply to you.

I trust that my comments are helpful.

Yours sincerely,



David Anderson, P.C., M.P.

c.c.: The Honourable Bob Speller, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Geoff Regan, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Pierre S. Pettigrew, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable Andy Mitchell, P.C., M.P.
The Honourable R. John Efford, P.C., M.P.