

# Keeyask Generation Project

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## **Summary of Round Two of the Public Involvement Program**

Round Two public involvement program (PIP) activities occurred between February 2012 and May 2012, with a focus on revisiting Aboriginal communities and groups, and other communities and groups in northern Manitoba and potentially affected and interested organizations that were contacted during the Round One PIP. Note that this summary includes events up to May 1, 2012. The purpose of Round Two of the PIP was to:

- Describe Project features and changes since Round One;
- Discuss preliminary results of the environmental assessment (EA) and receive input regarding these results;
- Obtain input about possible mitigation measures; and
- Document public input to be considered for the Project.

Initially, letters to notify potential participants of the upcoming Round Two PIP were sent in January 2012. A sample copy of these letters is provided in Appendix 3B.

In consideration of winter and spring holidays, a window of opportunity between February 2012 and May 2012 was utilized to present preliminary EA results and proposed mitigation measures to the public. In total, meetings were held with the leadership in 13 communities, followed by public information sessions for the respective members in five of these communities. Public open houses were held in Thompson, Gillam, and Winnipeg. Due to low attendance at the open house for Brandon during Round One of the PIP, an open house for Round Two was not held in that community. There were three meetings held with organizations and one workshop in Winnipeg with non-government organizations (NGOs). A workshop was planned for Thompson with resource users, but due to low attendee response it was cancelled, with recommendations for interested resource users to attend the open house held in Thompson or the Winnipeg workshop instead. After Round Two was completed, the offer to meet was extended to Aboriginal communities and organizations that expressed an interest in meeting to discuss the Project but were unable to schedule a meeting during the Round Two timeframe. Table 1 below provides a summary of the PIP events held during Round Two.

**Table 3A-1: Round Two Public Involvement Program Events**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Council and Community Meetings/Sessions</b>		
3/13/2012	Thompson Mayor and Council Meeting	City Hall
3/1/2012	Churchill Mayor and Council Meeting	Council Chambers
3/1/2012	Churchill Community Information Session	Pioneer Gallery
2/29/2012	Leaf Rapids Mayor and Council Meeting	Council Chambers
2/29/2012	Leaf Rapids Community Information Session	Town Centre Complex
3/6/2012	Gillam Mayor and Council Meeting	Council Chambers
3/13/2012	LGD* Mystery Lake Leadership Meeting	LGD* Office - Thompson
2/22/2012	Thicket Portage Mayor and Council Meeting	Council Office
2/22/2012	Thicket Portage Community Information Session	Administration Building
3/8/2012	Pikwitonei Mayor and Council Meeting	Recreation Centre
3/8/2012	Pikwitonei Community Information Session	Recreation Centre
2/21/2012	Wabowden Mayor and Council Meeting	Town Office
2/21/2012	Wabowden Community Information Session	Ke Na Now Centre
3/27/2012	Norway House Mayor and Council Meeting	Community Administration Building
3/14/2012	Nelson House Mayor and Council Meeting	Community Administration Building
3/7/2012	Cross Lake Mayor and Council Meeting	Town Office Cross Lake
4/4/2012	Ilford Mayor and Council Meeting	Town Office
4/24/2012	Shamattawa First Nation Chief and Council Meeting	Shamattawa Band Office
<b>Workshops</b>		
3/12/2012	Winnipeg NGO** Workshop	Delta Hotel
<b>Open Houses</b>		
3/13/2012	Thompson Open House	St. John's United Church
3/12/2012	Winnipeg Open House	Delta Hotel
3/6/2012	Gillam Open House	Recreation Complex
<b>Meetings with Organizations</b>		
3/15/2012	Northern Association of Community Councils Leadership Meeting	Marlborough Hotel, Winnipeg
3/13/2012	Keewatin Tribal Council Leadership Meeting	KTC Thompson Office
3/9/2012	Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Leadership Meeting	MKO Winnipeg Office

\* LGD refers to Local Government District

\*\*NGO refers to non-government organization

The Partnership contacted and offered to meet with potentially affected and interested Aboriginal communities and groups as well as other potentially affected communities and groups in northern Manitoba and other areas of Manitoba. Of those contacted, the Manitoba Metis Federation (see description of separate meeting process) and the Southern Chiefs Organization Inc. decided not to meet with the PIP team in Round Two of the PIP and Norway House First Nation and O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation were unable to find a time to schedule a meeting.

Communities and organizations that met in Round Two but did not meet in Round One include: Shamattawa First Nation and representatives of Granville Lake.

The Partnership will approach all of these groups again in Round Three of the PIP.

### **Public Involvement Events Format**

The public involvement methods used during Round Two were generally the same as those used in Round One. One change that was made was the development of a new Project website for the Partnership to convey Project-related information to interested parties ([www.Keeyask.com](http://www.Keeyask.com)).

**Meetings with community leadership** provided an opportunity to discuss the preliminary results of the EA and proposed mitigation measures; participants asked questions, offered perspectives and identified any issues or concerns. Meeting notes were recorded these draft notes were later reviewed by meeting participants for accuracy. The final meeting notes are available in Appendix 3C.

**Community information sessions** were held in most communities following the informal meetings with leadership to inform and have dialogue with interested community members about the preliminary results of the EA and proposed mitigation measures. Public notices (posters), an invitation letter and a meeting confirmation letter were sent to the community administrative officer (or person in a similar position) in advance of community information sessions so that adequate notice was provided to communities. Community members were guided through a series of information panels designed to provide participants with information about the Project. Comment forms were available at these meetings and allowed participants to provide comments anonymously. Participants were encouraged to ask questions and share perspectives about the Project; any unanswered questions were forwarded to the appropriate person (e.g., EA Study Team members, Manitoba Hydro staff) to provide a response. Finalized community information session notes, documentation identifying questions or perspectives raised and sign-in sheets are included in Appendix 3C.

**Meetings with Organizations** were held with the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), the Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC) and the Keewatin Tribal Council (KTC). A presentation was made to each organization about the preliminary results of the EA and proposed mitigation measures, followed by discussion. Participants were encouraged to complete comment forms or raise specific questions. Draft meeting notes were shared with the organizations for their review; once that review occurred, they were finalized and are included in Appendix 3F.

**Public open houses** were held in Gillam, Winnipeg and Thompson to provide opportunities for the broader public to learn about preliminary results of the EA and proposed mitigation measures for the Project and provide feedback. During Round One an open house was held in Brandon, but not in Round Two due to minimal attendance in Round One. Open houses were publicized through local newspaper advertisements, local radio stations, and posters were also used in the communities of Gillam and Thompson. Open houses were conducted in a format similar to the community information sessions including the use of information panels. Participants were encouraged to complete comment forms and to speak to members of the PIP Team. Any questions that were raised that could not be addressed by those in attendance were documented during the open house, forwarded to the appropriate person to respond to the request and followed up as required. Documentation from the open houses in the form

of summary notes identifying questions or perspectives raised and sign-in sheets are included in Appendix 3E.

A **Workshop** was held with NGOs in Winnipeg. A wide range of NGOs were contacted to determine which groups had an interest in the Project and would be able to provide the Partnership with feedback about the preliminary results of the EA and proposed mitigation measures. At the workshop, participants could review the Project information panels shown at open houses and community information sessions and discuss the Project with the PIP Team. Workshop participants also received a presentation about the results and participated in a facilitated question and answer period, as well as a round-table session where participants shared their issues and perspectives about the preliminary effects and proposed mitigation measures. Workshop participants were encouraged to fill-out comment forms and meeting notes from each of these sessions were drafted and reviewed by participants. Final meeting notes are included in Appendix 3D.

In Round One of the PIP a workshop was also held in Thompson with recreation and resource users. This workshop was not held in Round Two due to a low level of interest from those contacted. The two individuals who were interested in attending a workshop were informed about, and invited to, the open house that was held in Thompson in the evening of the same day the workshop had initially been scheduled to occur.

A **Newsletter** was provided to all who attended the meetings, open houses and workshop and was available on the Keeyask website ([www.keeyask.com](http://www.keeyask.com)). The newsletter was made specifically for Round Two in February 2012 and summarized the Project, the Partnership, the status of the EA process and results to date with respect to key topic areas. The key topic areas reviewed in the newsletter were prominently raised in Round One of the PIP and included the following: employment and training; flooding; water quality; mercury, fish and human health; lake sturgeon; and caribou. The newsletter also provided information about next steps and how to make contact with the Partnership regarding any questions, concerns or issues about the Project. The newsletter for Round Two is included in Appendix 3B.

**Information Panels** were used to communicate a summary of the newsletter content for all community meetings, open houses and the NGO workshop. The Round Two information panels were also provided in a handout format and were made available to interested parties at community leadership meetings and meetings with organizations, as well as on the Project website (link below). The information panels from Round Two are included in Appendix 3B.

**The Keeyask Hydropower Limited Partnership website** ([www.keeyask.com](http://www.keeyask.com)) was developed to distribute information about the Project and the Partnership to the general public. The website includes overview information about the Partnership and each member of the Partnership, the Project, the public involvement events, public involvement documents including Round One and Round Two newsletters and copies of the information panels. Other Project information includes news and information and links to the job referral service site and the Partners' websites. Visitors are able to directly submit questions, comments, or issues about the Project and the website is monitored for visitation activity and usage.

The website, active since early July 2011, will be maintained until the regulatory review process of the Project is completed. Should the Project obtain a license to proceed, this website would continue to be used to convey Project construction, monitoring and employment information to the public.

During Round One, a Project website ([www.hydro.mb.ca/projects/keeyask](http://www.hydro.mb.ca/projects/keeyask)) was developed to support the distribution of Project-related information to the general public. This Project website is also being kept up-to-date with Project and PIP related information and, if regulatory approvals are received, will be maintained until construction of the Project has been completed.

## **Key Issues and Perspectives**

The following highlights the issues and perspectives identified by potentially affected and interested Aboriginal and other communities and groups during Round Two. The information has been organized into general Project-related headings to contribute to the EA process. The comments below are not verbatim, but reflect the issues and perspectives identified during Round Two. A complete list of the issues and perspectives, responses provided, and the PIP event where the issues and perspectives were raised, is provided in Appendix 1C.

### **Project Planning Issues and Perspectives**

- Some PIP participants wanted to know about the financial strength of Manitoba Hydro and about the financial viability of the Project.
- There were supportive comments about the incorporation of Aboriginal traditional knowledge (ATK) in the EIS and how ATK is being utilized in the Project planning process. There is interest in seeing how this is communicated in the EIS.
- A question was asked about what the plant factor will be for the Project and how it will be optimized.
- There were some questions about the Manitoba Hydro system in relation to the Project including the following:
  - How this Project would affect the requirements for water at other facilities.
  - How this Project would affect water levels in Stephens Lake, in Split Lake, in Cross Lake, in Lake Winnipeg or in South Indian Lake.
  - Leaf Rapids and Churchill expressed concerns about effects from the Keeyask Project as it pertains to the Missi Falls control structure and the Churchill River Diversion.
  - There was concern that this Project would change the way that Lake Winnipeg is regulated and that communities like Cross Lake would continue to see effects on water levels.
- A question was asked about whether the Project site manager was selected yet. It was noted that John Markowsky, who played this role for the Wuskwatim Generation Project, did a very good job in public relations and kept local communities informed about that Project.

### **Project Training and Employment Issues and Perspectives**

- With the Wuskwatim Generation Project fresh in people's minds there were many comments about the hiring process and job-related experiences by people from northern communities.

Participants suggested that there was an opportunity to learn from the Wuskwatim experience to improve the process for Keeyask. Comments included:

- That there were problems with the Job Referral Service and they felt that some contractors bypassed the hiring provisions of the Burntwood-Nelson Agreement (BNA);
  - That mechanisms be put in place to address issues prior to hiring and not through an appeal process;
  - There were concerns that qualifications and length of experience required for lower level jobs were too stringent and would eliminate people who had received training for Project jobs, but had not been able to acquire enough hours to have the experience needed;
  - Some community members felt that lay-off practices were unfair and that there was discrimination on the Wuskwatim job site; and
  - That there should be improved monitoring of the hiring process and employment practices by the Partnership.
- Participants wanted to know more about the Advisory Group on Employment, particularly who could participate, the role they would play in employment and hiring issues and if this group had begun meeting to prepare for the Project hiring process.
  - Community leaders felt that information about training and employment opportunities should be made more accessible and clear. They felt that there is not enough information about current training opportunities and needs for this Project.
  - In several communities it was suggested that employment and training should be geared towards young people, particularly high school students.
  - In several Northern Affair communities participants expressed concern that either their small size and/or isolation put them at a disadvantage in terms of training, employment and contracting opportunities for major projects like Wuskwatim and Keeyask. They would like be informed about training, employment and subcontracting opportunities for the Keeyask Generation Project.
  - In general, communities wished to be kept up to date on employment opportunities so that they could advise their residents.
  - A comment was made that other companies in Canada retain high levels of First Nations employees; the Partnership should look to them for advice and ideas to improve the worker retention rates of northern Aboriginal workers.
  - One organization noted that there is a need to acknowledge the advancement of employment and training initiatives for Aboriginal and other northerners in the recent past. They felt that these initiatives have had a significant positive effect in the north.
  - In the meeting with the City of Thompson leadership it was noted that they will be looking for economic opportunities for any of their citizens who might be affected by the closure of the smelter and refinery at the Vale operations in Thompson.
  - Participants expressed their hope that there will be numerous apprenticeship opportunities for northerner Manitoba people on the Project.

## **Physical Issues and Perspectives**

- Communities were concerned that flood level estimates put forward by Manitoba Hydro could be inaccurate and that monitoring will be important, especially in Split Lake.
- In general community leaders and members were pleased with the plan to clear the reservoir area prior to impoundment.
- A concern was voiced about the greenhouse gas analysis relating to peat land that will be flooded.
- There was a general concern about water level fluctuations in the reservoir and the extent of erosion that would take place in Gull Lake.
- There were some questions about flooding in the Project area now, prior to construction. There were also questions about what would happen if there was a dam failure.
- It was noted that there has been a high level of erosion for the past two years due to the high flow levels on the Nelson River.
- A concern was expressed about the level of sedimentation that would be caused by the Project. It was noted that sediment continues to be a problem on South Indian Lake.
- A question was asked about how long the islands in the reservoir would be monitored to better understand the effects of flooding and erosion.

## **Aquatic Issues and Perspectives**

- Communities were concerned about reduced water quality in the Nelson River due to increased sedimentation and mercury, as well as how this would affect country food and drinking water.
- Community representatives noted that they were aware that the turbine selected for the Project would allow fish to pass through with a lower mortality and injury rate.
- Questions were received about whether fish passage would be used and why or why not.
- Questions were raised about stranding of fish as areas dewatered during construction and during operation.
- Concern was expressed about the effectiveness and success of the proposed lake sturgeon spawning habitat to be created by Manitoba Hydro. Participants also wanted to know more about the loss of lake sturgeon habitat for different life stages.
- A concern was expressed about the how long it would take the monitoring programs to determine if additional mitigation measures are required to reduce Project effects on lake sturgeon. It was noted that experience of other projects in other jurisdictions could be sought.
- There were many questions about the lake sturgeon stocking program and proposed new hatchery. Participants wanted to know:
  - Where stocking would occur;
  - How long the stocking would be done; and
  - Where the lake sturgeon would be taken from for the stocking program; some felt that the geographic range should be restricted to avoid affecting healthy populations.
- The health of lake sturgeon as a species was a general concern due to the current *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) listing process, as well as the ability to monitor and manage the fish population.

- Questions were raised about how the Project will affect mercury levels in fish, both upstream and downstream of the Project.

### **Terrestrial Issues and Perspectives**

- There were questions about the summer resident caribou in the Project region, including what type of caribou they are. Some noted that the appearance of the animal can be used to distinguish them.
- Concern was expressed about effects on, and ideas to try to replace, key caribou habitat, such as the islands in Gull Lake. At issue was whether these techniques will work at all.
- It was suggested that ATK could be used to address gaps in research about caribou movement. Questions were raised about how the monitoring techniques will be used to inform the mitigation measures and whether this information will be reported to the public.
- Concerns were expressed about the effect of the Project on caribou movement and on caribou food in the Project area.
- Concern was raised about how increased mercury levels would affect wildlife species that use river shoreline area.

### **Socio-economic and Heritage Issues and Perspectives**

- There were a number of questions and comments about making the timber that will be cleared from the reservoir accessible to communities for firewood or other purposes.
- There were inquiries about Manitoba Hydro's purchasing policies and if they would be consistent with what happened at the Wuskwatim Generation Project.
- In one community appreciation was expressed about the effort by Manitoba Hydro to minimize the effects on burial sites in the reservoir area. There was also a high level of interest in how gravesites and other heritage sites would be managed during Project construction and/or operation.
- A concern was expressed about the potential negative social effects (*e.g.*, substance abuse and crime) that could arise due to a surge in workers in the Project area, as well as a surplus of cash available to Project employees.
- Participants asked if there would be a cultural or spiritual component to the Keeyask Generation Project as was done for the Wuskwatim Generation Project.
- A number of issues and perspectives were shared about the effect of increased mercury levels after the reservoir has been flooded, including:
  - A concern was noted that imported food is expensive in the north and that contaminated water will make it more difficult for local people to harvest more economical country food.
  - Participants wanted to know where the mercury levels would be the highest.
  - Participants wanted more information about how the increased mercury levels in fish would be addressed for people who consume fish.
  - A concern was noted about the lack of testing of elders, and others who rely on fish for sustenance, to measure mercury levels.
- A participant wanted to know how many traplines would be affected by the Project.

- A participant asked how many communities draw their drinking water from the Nelson River and if they will have to do more to treat their drinking water after the Project is completed.
- One First Nation community expressed a concern that people from other communities are coming into their territory due to the depletion of resources in their area due to ongoing effect of past projects and they are concerned that this will be made worse by the Keeyask Generation Project.
- A question was asked what plans have been put in place to decommission the trails used during construction. It was suggested that there be a good communication plan with community members about these decommissioning plans.

### **Traffic and Safety**

- There were questions about rerouting PR 280 over the dam after the Project is built, including whether the north and south access roads would be built to provincial road standards and what would happen to the other section of PR 280 after the construction is complete. It was noted that trappers use this section of PR 280.
- The Gillam Council requested a contact person for traffic issues because they felt that they receive the majority of the complaints about road safety.
- There were concerns raised regarding the current condition of the PR 280 and that there are cell-phone dead zones; it was recommended that there should be full cell phone coverage as a safety measure.
- A concern was raised that the increased traffic could negatively affect the quality of the roads in Thompson and to the Project site.
- It was suggested that all of the improvements to PR 280 should be completed prior to the start of construction.

### **Comments about the Consultation Process**

- A question was raised about the format of information in the EIS. Some would prefer an electronic format and others a hard copy format.
- It was noted that it would be good to see the community based (ATK) and the scientific technical information combined and accessible to the public.
- A participant hoped that technical documents would be available to the public through the environmental process for the Keeyask Generation Project.
- It was noted that spring is not a very good time of year to meet; this is when some northern people are out goose hunting.
- It was suggested that additional visual materials should be provided, including graphic overlays of flooded areas.

### **Impacts from Past Hydroelectric Developments and Issues and Perspectives Unrelated to the Keeyask Generation Project**

- One organization was interested in seeing more information in the EIS about the socio-economic effects of the training and employment opportunities from the Wuskwatim Generation Project.

- A participant felt that the Keeyask Project creates a necessity for the Bipole III Project, yet the projects are being reviewed separately. They felt that this puts the \$200 million already spent on infrastructure as a pressure on future proposals.
- There was a concern that Manitoba Hydro was moving towards new projects without having dealt appropriately with grievances from past projects.