

October 31, 2023

Sean Carriere  
Impact Assessment Agency of Canada  
Prairie and Northern Region  
Canada Place, Suite 1145, 9700 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5J 4C3

Dear Sean Carriere:

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure is pleased to submit formal responses to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada's (IAAC) September 1, 2023, Round 3 Information Requests (IRs) for the proposed Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project (the Project). The department has developed these responses in consideration of information and feedback received on Round 2 Information Request Responses, and technical meetings with the federal review team, Indigenous groups, and the Rural Municipality (RM) of Grahamdale.

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure expects that this submission will help IAAC to further understand the Environmental Assessment (EA) completed for the proposed Project and inform the preparation of the draft EA Report pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*. It is our belief that the attached responses will demonstrate evidence of Manitoba's commitment in continuing to respond to issues and concerns, and to address any remaining uncertainties regarding technical issues to assist advancing the proposed Project application forward in the best way possible. In particular, we believe that our response submission further demonstrates our specific responsiveness to the concerns expressed by Indigenous groups and the RM of Grahamdale, including the inputs we have received since submission of the Round 2 Information Request Responses.

These responses represent an evolved description and assessment of key topics. This includes an improved understanding and description of potential effects and mitigation related to species at risk, the process for decommissioning of the emergency outlet channel, changes in water velocities at the Lake St. Martin Narrows, and clarification of

the wetland offsetting program, to name a few. As well, Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure has endeavored to summarize key themes arising from direct submissions from Indigenous groups, discussions related to potential effects on their use of the land, and how Indigenous input has been integrated into the assessment of effects and development of monitoring programs.

Communication with Indigenous groups and the RM of Grahamdale will continue after the anticipated receipt of regulatory approvals, and throughout the construction phase. Through established relationships, regular meetings, and committees, the department will continue its efforts to communicate, manage, and mitigate any issues or impacts that arise as the proposed Project moves forward, including on-going communication through the Environmental Advisory Committee throughout the operation phase. The communication process for the proposed Project is collaborative and adaptive and helps the proposed Project to consider the best interests of all those who may be affected.

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure would like to reiterate that the purpose of the proposed Project is to address an ongoing regional adverse effects by providing flood protection for communities surrounding Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin and allowing for more effective management of water levels on both lakes. The department is also mindful that climate change is affecting the intensity and frequency of severe weather events such as flooding, and there is a need to develop resiliency in regional flood management infrastructure. Without the proposed Project, the Manitoba government will have fewer options to mitigate flood conditions and respond to our changing climate. Areas around Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin are currently vulnerable, as was experienced in the 2011 and 2014 flood events. This means that the need for this proposed Project is urgent and it will improve Manitoba's climate resiliency.

It is with a sense of urgency in the context of the ever-present flood risk from our changing climate, and in consideration of the *Canadian Environment Assessment Act, 2012* extension deadline, that we look forward to a favorable response and continued collaboration with the IAAC in further advancing the proposed Project.

Thank you again for your inquiry.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

Cynthia Ritchie  
Assistant Deputy Minister