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In January 2018, the environmental assessment process under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012) for the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project (the Project) was initiated. In March 2020, Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure provided an Environmental Impact Statement that conformed with the requirements of the *Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines* to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (the Agency).

Under CEAA 2012, the Agency must complete the environmental assessment (EA) within 365 days. I understand that the Agency used a greater amount of the legislated timeline than is typically required due to the volume of information subject to technical analysis for the Project. This included multiple rounds of Information Requirements and the opportunities provided to the Technical Advisory Group members to review and comment on the Information Requirements and clarification questions. I also understand that Indigenous groups and public organizations in the Technical Advisory Group indicated that the volume of information provided was onerous to review within the timelines provided. Some also indicated their opposition to the Project and that the information was insufficient to continue the environmental assessment or prepare the Draft Environmental Assessment Report.

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Notwithstanding these views, on February 27, 2024, the Agency wrote to you indicating that it has the required information necessary to conduct the EA of the Project, and to prepare the draft Environmental Assessment Report and potential conditions under CEEA 2012. At that time, there were eight days left in the legislated timelines to complete the remaining steps of the environmental assessment.

Having considered these circumstances, I have decided, pursuant to subsection 27(3) of CEEA 2012, to extend the time limit for the environmental assessment of the Project by 90 days.

The extended time limit will provide the additional time to complete the remaining steps of the environmental assessment process including:

- finalizing the draft Environmental Assessment Report and potential conditions;
- conducting the 30-day comment period on the Draft Environmental Assessment Report and potential conditions;
- conducting consultation with potentially affected Indigenous groups;
- finalizing the Environmental Assessment Report and potential conditions based on the comments received during the comment period; and
- making my decision pursuant to section 52(1) of CEEA 2012 as to whether the project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects.

The Notice of the time limit extension will be posted to the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry on March 7, 2024.

Should Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure have any questions regarding the environmental assessment process, please contact Sean Carriere, Regional Director for the Prairie and Northern Region of the Agency, at Sean.Carriere@iaac-aeic.gc.ca or 416-436-7357.

Sincerely,

<Original signed by>

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P. (il/lui/he/him)