

# IAAC Technical Advisory Group – Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project

---

February 6 and 7, 2024

Project No.: 486

**Prepared By**

Two Worlds Consulting  
Unit 220 - 645 Fort Street  
Victoria, British Columbia  
V8W 1G2



**TWO WORLDS**  
CONSULTING

## Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project

Topic	Action Description
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024</li> </ul>
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8:30 – 4:30 CST</li> </ul>
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holiday Inn South Winnipeg, 1330 Pembina Hwy, Winnipeg MB</li> </ul>
Attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Berens River First Nation</li> <li>• Black River First Nation</li> <li>• Bloodvein First Nation</li> <li>• Brokenhead Ojibway Nation</li> <li>• Dakota Tipi First Nation</li> <li>• Dauphin River First Nation</li> <li>• Fisher River Cree Nation</li> <li>• Interlake Reserves Tribal Council</li> <li>• Keewatinook Fishers of Lake Winnipeg (public)</li> <li>• Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation</li> <li>• Lake Manitoba First Nation</li> <li>• Lake St. Martin First Nation</li> <li>• Little Saskatchewan First Nation</li> <li>• Misipawistik Cree Nation</li> <li>• Norway House Cree Nation</li> <li>• Peguis First Nation</li> <li>• Pimicikamak Okimawin</li> <li>• Pinaymootang First Nation</li> <li>• Poplar River First Nation</li> <li>• Rural Municipality of Grahamdale (public)</li> <li>• Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation</li> <li>• Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation</li> <li>• Tataskweyak Cree Nation</li> <li>• Trapline 18 (public)</li> <li>• Two Worlds Consulting</li> <li>• York Factory First Nation</li> <li>• Federal Agencies (IAAC, ISC, ECCC, HC, NRCan, TC, INFC, DFO)</li> </ul>

Meeting minutes predominantly consist of verbatim transcripts, capturing the exact words spoken during the meeting to maintain accuracy and transparency. However, to provide additional context and clarity, some sections are summarized, highlighting key points, timelines, decisions, or processes that occurred. This approach ensures that the minutes are comprehensive yet concise, offering a complete record of the meeting while enhancing readability and understanding for all participants.

## Technical Advisory Group Meeting February 6, 2024

### Welcome and Opening Remarks

The facilitators welcomed the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) attendees and gave opening remarks. The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) and Two Worlds Consulting (TWC) shared introductions. All members were asked to introduce themselves before speaking.

The Elder/Knowledge Keeper shared an Opening Prayer and welcome.

The Regional Director of IAAC welcomed and thanked participants for attending the TAG meeting. IAAC explained that the TAG is intended to support, but not replace, nation-to-nation consultation. IAAC recognized its duty to consult with rights holders and the need for one-on-one consultation with Indigenous Nations. The TAG is intended to be a forum that supports a better understanding of the changes the Project may cause in the environment and thereby help support each community's respective understanding of and discussions regarding potential impacts to their rights.

### General Discussion

**Lake St. Martin First Nation:** This year (2024), Mother Nature is being blamed for the flooding. The First Nations are being blamed for living in such conditions. We are left fending for ourselves without any support for living on our ancestral lands. If we are to address any of these issues, we are told that the First Nations must continue to self-govern. The situation that is being faced today is not new to Mother Nature, but the effects of man on the natural systems. The dams were not put there by Mother Nature. Due to the flooding, many First Nations have been forced out of their communities. The flooding occurred due to the dams put in place. The government could have done better. The government is putting sandbags and emergency dykes. When First Nations hear that the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada (IAAC) is working for the benefit of the First Nations, it is known that this is not true. IAAC said that First Nations were using this to get free homes and transportation to Winnipeg. It is a must to have better communications at all levels. It was mentioned that the temporary dykes were built, but the dykes did not do anything to prevent the flooding. What was not mentioned was who built the temporary dykes. We are left defending ourselves. We have fought long enough to get where we are today. The lands are being taken from us. We have lost our way and connection to the land. If you want to feel the power and the energy of Mother Nature, take your shoes off and go hug a tree to feel the energy that is taken from us. We are here because

of artificial flooding done by man. This is only a start. We hope that the IAAC acknowledges the letters that are going to be presented. We are so deeply rooted to the Earth.

**Trapline 18:** Shared information on the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) with TAG participants and suggested that IAAC review concerns prior to proceeding with the TAG meeting. We can start with a health break to give your team the opportunity to review these documents. Once the IAAC reads them, then the IAAC can connect with the minister and recommend a meeting with our respective leadership. [*Handed out EAC Terms of Reference (TOR) to participants*].

**IAAC:** IAAC responded that they are aware of the significant level of concern regarding the EAC and that this in part what is to be discussed at the TAG It is important to the process to keep moving forward. We want to acknowledge that the IAAC is a federal body, and it is the Province (proponent) that proposing this Project and the EAC as a means of ongoing engagement on the Project. IAAC acknowledges there have been many concerns raised regarding the EAC and we are happy to discuss how the Agency can play a role in figuring out how to address some of the concerns we've heard. IAAC intended on bringing up the discussion on the proponent's EAC within the presentations this afternoon but can shift to discuss it now if that is what the TAG wants.

### **Break in discussion.**

#### **Environmental Advisory Committee Terms of Reference**

Agenda was adjusted to reflect participants desire to discuss the Manitoba Government's EAC TOR.

**Interlake Reserves Tribal Council:** We were asked to develop a TOR. We did not agree with the EAC. We told IAAC and we sent a letter to the Prime Minister. We wanted a separate EAC like what the pipelines were given. The pipeline EACs can control and have input into what is happening. The EAC set up with Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) is controlled by MTI and we did not agree with it. Our three communities pulled out of it.

**Pimicikamak Okimawin:** It goes against the Northern Flood Agreement and the water levels that were agreed to. The governments are stepping on our toes which will result in a claim. This is what the cost will be. The government did not tell us about the plans right away, and just recently we found out about what is transpiring. The government is digging up channels to move water which goes against the Northern Federal Agreement.

**Trapline 18:** I just found out you are aware of the documents I presented to the IAAC before the break. This is why I proposed the time to read it. It has an impact on everyone, and it is being documented, reported, and submitted. Until today, we did not know that the IAAC was aware of it. The IAAC said that the IAAC is open, transparent, and trustworthy. Then we find out the IAAC is in the works of it for a while. In 2018, we received an incomplete project description. Why did no one know about it? I heard about it from someone. We received a

letter from a lawyer. IAAC owes that obligation to the First Nations under Section 35. Everyone has their own process. This is the IAAC's obligation to First Nations. It is difficult to hear about a First Nation community having to pipe water from 45 kilometres away. The governments have not been honest. We thought we were involved and engaged, then we find out that there are deals going on behind the scenes. I suggested to IAAC to have a meeting with deputies and ministers. IAAC is saying that the IAAC is completing an environmental audit of the system. IAAC is doing a horrible job. Why are First Nations not being given an option for potable water? An environmental audit and proper risk assessment needs to be completed. Additionally, it needs to be a First Nations driven advisory committee on that process. The IAAC needs to make that a commitment. Our First Nations can identify the people that should be on the advisory committee. The government is taking away the life that is vital to the communities. The government is destroying the water. Every Indigenous community is dealing with floods, moldy basements, and broken roads. We do not know what the government is doing in the backroom. The government could have told us about it. This is serious.

**IAAC:** The EAC is an initiative developed by the proponent, Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure, as a means of ongoing engagement on the Project moving forward. IAAC is aware of the committee but has not been provided with the TOR previously. IAAC has heard many concerns from Indigenous Nations about the structure, function, participation, and transparency of the EAC. What could be done moving forward to make the EAC positive?

**Trapline 18:** An environmental audit by Indigenous people to understand the environmental state and a risk assessment is required.

**Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation:** MTI has not presented anything to address the First Nations concerns. It is a top-down system; and MTI fails to consider us as a primary. We demand to be a primary stakeholder as we are upstream.

**IAAC:** IAAC recognizes that not all Indigenous Nations were invited to participate in the EAC. Therefore, IAAC is considering requiring the proponent to offer the opportunity for all Indigenous Nations engaged on the Project to participate. However, IAAC also notes that large forums are not always conducive of meaningful conversations so we recognize that this may not be the solution. We are looking for your feedback on what you would want to see through the EAC. IAAC is also considering requiring the proponent to post a report of the recommendations that come from the EAC and why or why not they implemented them in order to increase transparency. Is there anything else that you would like to see as part of the EAC moving forward?

**Tataskweyak Cree Nation:** Did the IAAC hear concerns from the First Nations that they do not want to have project?

**IAAC:** Yes, IAAC acknowledges the opposition to the Project. IAAC is here to listen but not the decision maker. The Minister of Environment and Climate Change is the decision-maker on whether the Project is likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects. IAAC takes the

feedback from Indigenous Nations, Indigenous groups, proponent, the public, federal authorities, and the province and puts it into the environmental assessment report to present the findings to the Minister. There will be a comment period for Indigenous Nations and the public to provide comments on the report that will be that are incorporated as well.

**IAAC:** If there are elements that the First Nations would like to see included in the EAC, the IAAC can take that away and see how it can be shaped. The recommendations that you provide shape what would be required of the proponent if this Project moves forward.

**Fisher River Cree Nation:** MTI has limited the participants (in the EAC) from each community to 2 people. This includes an individual from council and a land manager to be members. The councillors change every 2 years, and some people are new to it. I have been working on the Project for 5 years now and I cannot attend it. It is unfair if MTI considers the EAC a part of the consultation process because it is not. For the TOR, MTI is going to choose between communities which offset MTI should go on with. The First Nations used to make a source of income trapping muskrats, after the dam was put in, it was gone. If they came up with a proposal to enhance and/or develop a marsh so that the muskrats came back, it would be important to them. MTI is putting communities to EAC, and the EAC wants them to decide to figure out which proposal to go ahead with. How can you have 10 communities with 10 different priorities come to a consensus? That is not living up to the EAC's role.

**IAAC:** The EAC will not be the only part moving forward. The IAAC is considering making a requirement for the proponent to develop community-specific communication and engagement plans. As a part of those plans, including requiring notification and how it is done, maps of where the final project are, and key harvesting periods. The IAAC is looking for feedback on what should be included in those as well.

**Trapline 18:** Do you even know what the project is about? It is moving water to mitigate flood. The IAAC's suggestion that the IAAC is going to require to the proponent to be mindful of harvesting periods. It does not make sense.

**IAAC:** IAAC understands that the Project is moving water. One of the considerations that IAAC is considering requiring the proponent to do within their community-specific engagement plans is to work with that community to determine when critical harvesting periods are and to avoid certain activities that could impact those periods. For example, they could modify when construction activities occur to account for potential impacts to hunting, trapping, fishing activities.

**Trapline 18:** Do you realize how big this project is? You think they are going to stop pouring concrete when a fisherman is driving by? What the IAAC is suggesting is not giving clarity. We are participating and being transparent.

**IAAC:** The environmental assessment is a planning tool for if the project were to go ahead and IAAC is looking for what could be in place to mitigate or manage potential effects. IAAC

understands the magnitude of this project which is why IAAC is hoping to go through many of the potential mitigations today and obtain your feedback. IAAC wants to continue hearing this input. If there are specific elements that Indigenous Nations want to see as part of the community-specific engagement plans, or other aspects, IAAC will consider them. IAAC wants to hear comments, incorporate them into the EA report, and respond to concerns.

**Poplar River First Nation:** It said there was a lack of participation from Indigenous communities. What does that mean?

**IAAC:** IAAC acknowledges that some Indigenous Nations and Indigenous groups have indicated that they do not want to participate in the EAC, as indicated earlier by the IRTC for example. As a part of this TAG meeting, we are trying to understand how we can help improve the EAC such as improving participation.

**Poplar River First Nation:** Is there a reason?

**IAAC:** IAAC is trying to hear how to understand what Indigenous Nations want to see in the committee and how to incorporate that into potential conditions. What do we need to do to get the Indigenous Nations to participate? IAAC is open to hearing suggestions.

**Poplar River First Nation:** My recommendation is to pay attention to what the First Nations are saying. IAAC needs to listen to what they have to say.

**IAAC:** IAAC is here to learn and open to hearing what everyone has to say.

**Norway House Cree Nation:** The IAAC needs to listen to the communities. MTI has been shady throughout this period. Our community is located at the top of Lake Winnipeg, we have 2 channels. We have about 50 years' experience with man-made channels. We were told it would reach a state of equilibrium. Based on our experience, we were not given the opportunity to review. We are still fighting for those documents. These should have been provided to us. The EAC cannot speak for all the Nations. We will all be impacted differently. Water is life. There is a problem in the south with flooding. I have an obligation to have access to potable, safe drinking water. These are the concerns. For MTI to say the Nations downstream are not impacted is ridiculous. They only want to talk to some people. Lake Winnipeg is one of the largest freshwater lakes. No one is benefiting from not protecting it. We need to look at existing permits. Stop everything before you consider writing a response on the project.

**Tataskweyak Cree Nation:** Manitoba Hydro has said that the province is going to need more power in 2029. Hydro put up a bunch of lights on my street that were not needed just last week. The project will feed the dam at the end of the Nelson River. Then it will be built from Bakers Lake. The First Nations are just pawns along the way. I wonder if IAAC knows that we know this, but IAAC will still tell us otherwise. The people from the land are the committee. Out of sight, out of mind, comes to mind. We as First Nations have had a Land Use Plan (LUP). It was beautiful until first contact. What makes the need of people that live on electricity more than what the First Nations need?

**Peguis First Nation:** It is missing a lot of things regarding Section 35. Our Nation has not finished the Section 35 process. That is something that should be addressed first. There have been multiple projects put forward to address the flooding, many have been put off dealing with this project. This is another Section 35 process that the government is failing to address the concerns for Section 35. There are issues being brought up with how the project is impacting the First Nations. For the EAC, they need to give us regulatory power. Advice is advice. What's the point of us telling you what's wrong if you don't listen? Give us authority to decide whether this project will go through.

**Tataskweyak Cree Nation:** Meeting with Indigenous groups? We are Indigenous Nations. In the water quality study, our First Nation found out a lot about our water by doing our own research and studies. We used our own people and listened to our Elders. We had representatives from Health Canada to say that our water is safe. We have been echoing the voices of our Elders from decades before. They knew that the water was no good. We found out there is so much wrong with our water from upstream developments that have gone back decades. This is not easy to talk about. The First Nations are being treated like they cannot make up their own minds. This is not the case. We took care of the land, and the land took care of us. I feel anger, frustration, and hurt. My livelihood as a fisherman was taken away because of the projects that were happening. Winnipeg dumps sewage water in the river every year. Where are the regulators saying no? We do not hear Canada or Manitoba saying that. The regulators are not speaking for us. We are the ones who lose in the end. My education came from the lake and ancestors and grandfathers. The habitats are destroyed, and fish populations are declining. People took their lives because of what the projects took from them. The regulators are for the proponents. The trust is not there. IAAC will use what we say against us. We had to prove that our water is bad. We have pictures, stories, and documentations. We have sent them. Our lawyers took the pictures to Canada. Only then, were they open to starting a dialogue. It opened Canada's eyes. Businesses do not run on feelings. We are told this dirty water is safe to drink from. We had to put up our own signs on Split Lake, so our children do not go in and get rashes.

**Keewatinook Fishers of Lake Winnipeg:** The province has said that there has been adequate consultation all along. Under the 2009 Consultation Act in Manitoba, there must be a written consultation plan. We are expecting a plan. We are looking at informed consent. It is our right to say no to the project. With United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), if we say no, it is binding on the federal government. We need to look at the time frame on the project, as it is moving too fast to have consultation done properly.

**Misipawistik Cree Nation/Tataskweyak Cree Nation:** Comment on the EAC, we are getting busy to discuss the mitigation measures, but we have not even approved the project. Is the deadline at the end of February? We want to know when the deadline is and where IAAC is at. There is not near enough time to assess the potential impacts. Has the IAAC never not approved a project? What if Manitoba does not meet the deadline? Do we move to the 2019



Act? We are on the 2012 Act, and we need transparency on that. How do we get the engagement? The IAAC are the messengers.

**Pimicikamak Okimawin:** IAAC is sweeping us off the floor. We the people. This was our land right from the start to look after us. You only came here a few centuries ago, it remains Red Mans land. Canada remains the red land, we never gave it up. When you talk about jurisdiction, you are talking about reserves, which is our territory. That's our jurisdiction, including the reserve. The land is still our land. That goes for every other First Nation here. The IAAC must tell your minister, that it's not just First Nation reserves or lands, it's the whole territory. It's a devastation of lands, and you keep reaping from them. There is going to be so much dirty water flowing through there. They were not meant for us to use; it is all down in the states. It is just more money that is going to be made by the government.

**Lake St. Martin First Nation:** There are missing representatives at the TAG. We need to see someone from the governing general council and the council of Canada to hear what is happening to our communities. This is a big project that will impact everything. We have been impacted since that diversion happened. We are dealing with the project being forced on us one more time, and we as a Nation have the power, voice, and courts, and are well documented to take this forward. We will go to the lower courts, and we can file a claim. Lake St. Martin has about 6 outstanding claims. We are going to prevail, and our cause will be heard. We will go to the lower courts and file. We are ready to go to court because of what we have been put through all these years. What will happen to our children who trap, hunt, and fish? They were taken from us right in the beginning. They said climate change was going to happen.

**Pinaymootang First Nation:** Our Elders and ancestors told us that our water will be contaminated. This is when we still drank out of the water from lakes. We were told that one day, they will be selling water. He said one day the land is going to be contaminated. This will impact the wildlife and everything we consume within the land; the plant life is what the animals eat. We heard about the flooding from underneath that has those contaminants as well. Our source of life is water and food. Think about that next time you eat somewhere. Think about where it came from, is the food you are eating healthy? Think about these things when you eat food. As stewards of the land, we have been fighting to protect these. We are there all seasons, not just to do a study for a week. We know what goes on in our territory. What we say here today is the truth and knowledge. We are the ones who live in our territories.

### **Lunch break.**

**Pimicikamak Okimawin:** IAAC's slide about the process that leads to the minister, I would like to tell you about what that chart reminds me of. It does not sit well with me. From our Indigenous community perspective, who here supports what you are doing? That needs to be captured. IAAC said that the minister will decide. At the end, it all seems irrelevant. I mentioned that I would bring a letter to you from Pimicikamak Okimawin. I would like to say that having members at the TAG does not mean consultation. Consultation does not mean consent. This is a revisitation of several processes. Anytime you alter nature, it will have devastating impacts. I

wanted to alert you of your audience. We do not blame IAAC personally but at the end of it all, it is the minister who decides. We are not supposed to be stakeholders. We are the original people of this land.

**IAAC:** Thank you for sharing. IAAC knows this is a hard process from a lack of trust, data gaps, and a lack of communication. I am conveying my gratitude to the people that have spoken up. IAAC is looking to collaborate with next steps and communicate with you. We want to hear about your communities' views and perspectives. This is one of the several meetings that will hopefully lead us to conclusions. What does the dialogue mean and how can we ensure that we have informed decisions from all parties.

**Lake St. Martin First Nation:** After hearing all the frustration that all the First Nations are feeling, the conclusion is the Duty to Consult is something that both governments have failed to do. We are at a point where we have no choice but to take both governments to court. We have enough facts to go to small claims courts. There is no turn around. If you go to a federal court, they will deny you. It cost our Nation 250 000\$. I have confidence that I can take the government to court. I am hearing our Nations saying no for the failure to consult. We have enough documents already to stop the project. I am hearing about the effects downstream and upstream; we are feeling the impacts. It is just like when we signed the treaty, the government sent an Indian agent. We never ceded our land with Canada and Manitoba. We need to step back, what is the rush?

**Dauphin River First Nation:** I have lived in Dauphin River all my life, worked in fishing, and as Chief, it amazes me how much interest is in my territory. This project is just a few kilometers from my living room. In 2011, the government intentionally flooded our community. There was never any mention of when we were going to be able to come back home. We were here for 11 years. My community is a commercial fishing community. I cannot fish because the water has been destroyed. Commercial fishing is down to 0. Fishermen were compensated for one year but were out of commission for four years. You do not need money to live in Dauphin River, but you do in Winnipeg. They sold their boats, skidoos, etc. and we were not given a time to come home. The government called it Operation Return Home and said that they were going to put our community back together. The government demolished our school, and they said that Dauphin River was going to get a better one. Dauphin River got a smaller gymnasium, about half the size of the previous. This is what is frustrating. The government said you are not going to see the fishing license again. If I was still Chief, I would say that we are taking you to court. The people that must work suffer in the community. This project should not go ahead until 2011 is settled. We signed an agreement in principle, but we never settled 2011. We are where the water is going to drain to. In 1985, cops were putting people in police cars. It was one guy standing up to a force. We see people going against pipelines, they get arrested if they cannot prove a point.

**IAAC:** We know we are not the Minister. What you do have in this room, you have people that are writing chapters, hearing you, we are all on the ground writing the report and

acknowledging what you have said. Cumulative effects are a part that is looked at what we can assess. It is limited on how residual effects of this project interact with past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects. The trauma that we heard of today from the past flooding is considered in our assessment of the historical context and cumulative impacts on rights. The First Nations rights have already been impacted and we understand that it is a highly sensitive context for which rights are already impacted.

**IAAC:** In terms of the Duty to Consult, that is the minimum. We are here to do our part to learn and inform the final decision making. There is a lot of work yet to be done to draft the Environmental Assessment Report, which includes continuing consultation with potentially impacted Indigenous Nations.

**Trapline 18:** You are going to put in a request to the minister? You are documenting the environmental audit and risk assessment that I had mentioned earlier? You mentioned that you are limited in assessing cumulative effects. Why are we discussing cumulative effects? The consensus in the room is that none of the other projects included First Nations. Now you are saying that this project will include the comments from previous projects. You have not asked the proponent for all the information. They are the ones that are responsible for all the emotion that you experienced this morning. If we are passing this information onto you, we are limited to your scope. When I offered you that document, you said you had not seen it and then you said you had it for a while. You are changing the process again saying you will look at past projects. Before the 1930 Natural Resources Transfer Act, our communities used to manage a fish hatchery. We used to manage our own resources. They were talking about sustenance, and you collected that when signing treaties. You keep saying you are limited but want us to cry and spill our guts. Get a commitment from the minister to meet with the leaders. You have destroyed the communities. Make a commitment to provide resources for the TAG to get together in the next month. You should be paying for it and make sure there are snacks. This is important to our communities. The future for us does not look very bright. We want to talk to the minister before anything else. We need to nail this down to have dialogue to have open and transparent discussion with people that will make the decision. The minister does not care.

**IAAC:** Thank you for sharing. IAAC will bring up this request. It is more impactful to get it in writing from Nations.

**Lake St. Martin First Nation:** We have already been one of the most impacted communities in Manitoba. We did not have the capacity to provide jobs for people like me. There was no diabetes, social assistance, and we were self-sufficient. The duty to fish was taken away from me. My grandfather told me to pursue education because fishing was dead. I should have been able to provide for my family. I will not be able to pass these teachings onto them. There is nowhere to trap. There are 3 people in our community that still trap but they must go far away from Lake St. Martin. They hardly trap anything. It used to be the best place for white fish to spawn. The fisherman knew when to fish. The fisherman's way of life has been diminished in our communities. We are willing to stand together if legal action is to happen. I do not consider

the TAG to be consultation. The government likes to use us showing up to meetings as consultation. I wanted to continue that way of life, but I had to pursue school. I lost my language because I had to leave my community. The game of politics is new to us. I respect everyone that is up here speaking today. They must hear our voices.

**Pinaymootang First Nation:** When the First Nations meet with government officials, this is not consultation. MTI has ignored our community. All issues and concerns from our knowledge keepers and Elders have been ignored. The impacts of the channel on our fishing, hunting, trapping, spawning sites, and plants and medicines have already been affected. It will be impacted more in the future. Is the channel going to be built even if we do not approve it? This came straight from the province. Why are we holding the meetings if the channel is going to be built already? MTI does not care about what we say. If they did care what we had to say, the channels would not be drawn like that. Our natural rivers are winding, and the contaminants are being collected on those curves. The project design is straight, the contaminants are going to go right through and contaminate our water ways. The impact that it will have on our community, culture, and language is that we are given land-based dollars now. Is that just a little solution from the government? How can we teach our young people to live off the land if the land is destroyed? MTI has failed to address any issues and listen to us. The channel will cause further erosion of lands. The natural habitats of fish and wildlife will be destroyed. You are infringing on our rights and laws. We oppose strongly to this project. This project will have irreversible changes. It is impacting our fishing rights. We used to harvest moose and fish there. It will change how we use our water and how we connect to the area. We are just starting to get our youth back on the land. This project will stop all our goals and progress to pass on knowledge and heal the lands. It takes seven years to heal the land and it is starting to heal now. MTI refuses to work with us to resolve our concerns. They keep repeating the same information and refusing to listen to our knowledge holders. We told them to make sure the wetlands are not impacted. We need First Nations monitors. The EAC is not appropriate way to deal with the project because they are too involved with MTI. This project is not mitigation to us. We need to implement UNDRIP in Canada. The fishway will be a breeding ground for invasive species. Please do not make any hasty decisions. I want every Nation to continue to support for this matter.

**Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation:** Lake Winnipeg is one of the largest freshwater lakes in the world. It was designated as one of the most threatened lakes in the world. It is endangered. This has not been reflected in documents or mentioned by MTI. It is on the verge of dying without the project. This project is a death sentence. Why would the province want to kill off the lake? There is wetland restoration, which helps with flood mitigation and is a phosphorous sink. It is a rich ecological habitat with diverse species. Why is wetland restoration not being considered? The First Nations should have oversight. They are doing a bad job at managing current water structures, why should we trust that they can manage more? Wetland restoration should be addressed as an alternative.

**Berens River First Nation:** What percentage does IAAC think that the project will go through?

**IAAC:** The decision lies with the Minister, there isn't a percentage to indicate. The environmental assessment process is a planning tool, there are other regulatory processes that would come after this as well.

**Berens River First Nation:** The project will go through, and we know this. The power is pushing us into a corner that you call reservations that you will easily move. If we do not listen, you call the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to move us. The culprit is Manitoba Hydro. The people that are sitting here are costing taxpayers. We are talking about one of the largest bodies in the world. No one knows what they are doing, the effects of the lake are so far in already. Are we able to reverse the effects that have already been done? What percentage will the effects be reversed? When something is said, it should be honoured. Unfortunately, what is more important these days is what we get out of the land.

**Little Saskatchewan First Nation:** As a child, I rode my horses in this area. We always had youth come to our farm to ride the horses. The control structure destroyed the lower streams. The water game destroyed our farms in our community. People that had farms with horses were all destroyed. The cattle were getting foot disease and people were not able to sustain the cost of farming. The fisherman could not fish on the lake because of the water tables going up and down. Their nets would freeze to the ice. The government thinks they know better than the First Nations that were born and raised on the land. We were put on the reserves to die. I told the government that the channel will not work. It is going to be like a bottleneck, it will not sustain the channel. Where is the Manitoba Hydro today? They have not sat in our meetings once. Our businesses are struggling because our roads are bad. The government does not want to keep our roads clean and clear; they cannot even put gravel on our roadways. The province already said that they are putting hydro turbines there. Do not take me being here as consultation. Do not just consult with leadership. The government needs to consult with youth, Elders, and members. When my band members were evacuated from the reserve, they forced my Elders to eat fries and burgers. The facilities were not built from the government. The government of Manitoba purposely flooded the lakes. Our health centre and daycare facilities have not been replaced. Correct the wrongs that the government did, then maybe we can talk about the channel. Divide and conquer is what we are best known for here. The deals should be the same. Because we do not stick together, they are not the same. The government challenged me to prove that we needed more housing. We gave them 310 names, they said we could not use it because they are 18. It failed to consider the people that left and came back 10 years later. We are short 110 homes in our community. Who can afford to live for 675\$ a month? We need more funding for our children to attend school in urban settings. Meaningful consultations mean to do it from your heart. Reconciliation means friendly relations. Our ancestors have shown that to you. We helped your ancestors survive. If we sign that, you will flood my First Nations and my ancestors that are buried there. A ski hill is being built, where is my recreation from my youth? We cannot swim in these areas. We had to shut down our

restaurant because no one could go down the road. It hurts me to hear when youth say that they want to go back home to Winnipeg, because they are urbanized. We lost 5 Elders to heart attacks. Members indicated that they do not consider their presence at the TAG today to be consultation, and that consultation needs to include all community members, including youth and elders, not just the leadership. The flood in 2011 was not natural, that it was artificial flooding by the government. It was extremely destructive and there is a need to correct the wrongs from 2011 prior to discussing projects moving forward. Requested homes, high schools, new health center, arena, and funding for youth, to mend the wrong of the 2011 flood before moving forward with anything else. If you want your channel, you will give me the land that I have already given you, I want land around Number 6 island, to sustain livelihood. How do you pay back a loan to help the farmers? You are sending false hope here. We need to work together and move forward in a good way. If you are serious about reconciliation, listen to us, as we grew up on these lands. This is destroying our community. A lot of our people are shy and do not want to attack.

**IAAC:** Thank you for sharing that. IAAC wants to acknowledge that this is not the only opportunity to provide comments and inform the process. There are ongoing opportunities to provide comments. IAAC will be continuing to consult with you to inform the Environmental Assessment Report and recommendations that go to the Minister.

**Berens River First Nation:** I want to apologize to the youth and their voices need to be heard. It is only dually appointed elected officials. I am a strong advocate for water, as it is a human right. That is why I stand for it. I oppose this project. The reason why I said no was because he made a rude comment. We are not spending taxpayers' dollars.

**York Factory First Nation:** There are many things that concern us. When we first heard about this, we decided to follow the route. What we saw that would be destroyed that will never be replaced. All our livelihoods will be lost. Nothing will ever be replaced. I want to warn the government is that your heading is just beginning. We have never had diseases when the people lived in York Factory because of what they ate. Since we got there in 1957, many people have suffered from health illnesses. You were supposed to stand with them. You stood beside the government. You provided money to replace their houses. The government came in and asked if I wanted to come into the band office and talk. The federal government is supposed to look after us. They will not go all out to help you; they will give you money because they do not want to lose their jobs. I do not see anything coming out of this, I see that we are being dismissed. You wait until everyone has their say, and then you come to a decision. You do not force people to make decisions right off the bat. The person making the final decision is not here. They do not hear our voices. How can one person decide on something regarding lives of thousands of people? I recommend going to court and let us all be witnesses in court. At least people in the courtroom will listen to us. There is money spent overseas to help other people, they would rather spend millions of dollars in war than clean up their own backyard. You clean your backyard up before you go to help others. I would rather see them go to court.

**IAAC:** Thank you for sharing. We want to note that IAAC is considering requiring the proponent to retain Indigenous monitors to support various monitoring efforts associated with the project, like surface water monitoring, groundwater monitoring, wildlife monitoring, etc. Are there any specific suggestions the TAG has that could make this key mitigation measure more effective?

**Poplar River First Nation:** There are First Nations in this room that have Indigenous monitors. The proponent should not be in charge of training certified monitors. The proponent should not have a say in where they get the training to do it.

**Little Saskatchewan First Nation:** We want Indigenous-led monitoring programs.

**Pinaymootang First Nation/Sandy Bay First Nation:** In the EAC, all monitoring will be led by the EAC. Why are these programs being tackled by the proponent?

**IAAC:** We would love to chat to understand.

**Sandy Bay First Nation:** All of this is assuming this project is going through, we are talking about mitigating the effects of flooding. The wording is okay we are going to do this but how are we going to mitigate it. All the First Nations are opposing the project. Why are we here?

**Interlake Reserves Tribal Council:** It was proposed as a flood mitigation project that will not prevent flooding.

**Fisher River Cree Nation:** They are not going to finish their consultation by February 26. They would not be finished by the end of February. Would the condition of approval require MTI to finish their consultation? Fisher River First Nation is opposed. Consultation and accommodation have to be finished before decision making. Fisher River First Nation has 3 outstanding consultation agreements going back to 7 years ago. MTI told them that they consulted but wasn't true. All three were written agreements. Fisher River First Nation will not accept this project to go ahead when consultation is not done. Is that something that the IAAC considers in their recommendations to the minister, that they can put in a precondition until the consultation is done?

**IAAC:** IAAC notes that the Proponent will be required to continue to consult on various aspects of the Project and ongoing effects and monitoring, as described by some of the key mitigation measures. As a part of the potential conditions, it will lay out what that means when consultation is required, such as how the proponent has to reach out to each Indigenous Nations engaged. We understand that consultation needs to continue to be ongoing and we will continue to consult with you throughout the rest of the process. Whether or not we condition the proponent, you are right.

**Fisher River Cree Nation:** Consultation and accommodation needs to be done before the project proceeds. They will not do it and we know that. We disagree with the cumulative effects. They look at the valued components and say after mitigation, no effects, same with

wildlife and fish. They will lump it together and say that valued components are nothing. Current uses of lands and traditional resources are treated as a general category. They need to deal with those things on a community specific basis. Everyone has different rights and treaties. You cannot lump everything together. We have not gotten a response from MTI. Go to the communities and talk to them.

**IAAC:** IAAC wants to better understand these distinctions and would like to continue to discuss this with each group on a one-on-one basis.

**Peguis First Nation:** Mitigation is step two; the number one choice is avoidance. Does this prevent flooding? MTI has said the project will not prevent flooding. What is the main cause of flooding? You start looking upstream. There is too much water that the system cannot handle. You do not head downstream to solve the problem. Why is there too much water in the Portage diversion. The Assiniboine River has too much water coming. Why do you not start looking at projects that will solve drought and flooding at the same time? Quit overcomplicating it because it is easy.

**Dauphin River First Nation:** The 2011 flooding effects on Dauphin River First Nation should be dealt with first.

**University of Manitoba (Sagkeeng First Nation):** For the last few years, I watched the devastation build in those communities. If we do nothing to stop it, it is creating a hopeless path. We need to go back to an ecological restoration model. You have key adaptation measures. You are using the wrong words. Mitigation should be prevention. Why is the government not using Indigenous monitors to understand the land now? That would be using Traditional Knowledge and Indigenous Knowledge properly. You are expecting people to adapt. The key mitigation measures should be accurate by figuring out how to prevent it. We should not be creating dykes; we need to work with nature. We are in the decade of ecological restoration. Can I see anything other than the diversion routes? I want to see prevention and mitigation that looks at alternatives that include pothole prairies and ecological restoration.

**IAAC:** The IAAC acknowledges that we are limited to assessing the project as proposed. The background work to determine what the project should and what should be proposed is done by Manitoba in advance. IAAC's role is to assess the effects of this project, incorporating everything we've heard from the TAG, Indigenous Nations, and members of the public, to make a recommendation to the Minister on the potential significance of effects.

**IAAC:** The Province had a program called the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program that you can find more information online. It may answer some of your questions that look at the Basin more holistically. It is a separate program initiative.

**Trapline 18:** Comments regarding the outcome of the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program where they recommended planter's boxes be used to offset effects in a marsh.



**Keewatinook Fishers of Lake Winnipeg:** The project is down to the bedrock and a hydraulic situation to lower the water pressure that is initiated in the process. When did the scope of work and nature of work change?

**IAAC:** Over the course of 5 or 6 years, through further refining the details of a project, the proponent can identify and change design based on what they hear. Over the course of the technical review, there are changes in designs that occurred and updated the project descriptions. The environmental assessment is a planning tool which is meant to identify and assess the potential adverse effects of the project and what measures can be undertaken to mitigate and manage those adverse impacts. The way the process works is that IAAC must conduct the environmental assessment of the project by taking in information from all parties involved and providing a recommendation to the Minister and then the Minister makes the decision on the significance of adverse environmental effects.

**Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation:** Do you have authority to make recommendations based on the report?

**IAAC:** Yes, we make recommendations to the Minister in the environmental assessment report. We are required to identify some of the solutions that could be put in place should the Project be allowed to proceed, which is the reason we are here today.

**Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation:** What recommendations do you recommend today?

**IAAC:** We came to discuss draft key mitigation measures during this TAG. We will acknowledge what we heard, and the notes of this meeting will all go on the public record.

**Little Saskatchewan First Nation:** The government did not do an environmental cleanup from the flood. The lake is endangered of being more damaged.

**Meeting concluded.**

## Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels Project Technical Advisory Group Meeting February 7, 2024

Topic	Action Description
Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>February 7, 2024</li></ul>
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>8:30 – 3:00 CST</li></ul>
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Holiday Inn South Winnipeg, 1330 Pembina Hwy, Winnipeg MB</li></ul>

### Welcome and Overview of Day 1

Attendees had the opportunity to attend a pipe ceremony on the morning of Day 2.

The facilitators welcomed the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) attendees and gave opening remarks. IAAC and TWC shared introductions. All members were asked to introduce themselves before speaking.

The Elder/Knowledge Keeper shared an Opening Prayer and welcome.

The Regional Director of IAAC welcomed and thanked participants for attending the TAG meeting.

IAAC presented on the process of developing draft potential federal conditions, including the development of technically and economically feasible key mitigation measures that would be legally binding on the Proponent should the project be allowed to proceed.

### General Discussion

**Tataskweyak Cree Nation:** With the team that is here, how many of you are from Manitoba? Are there any people from the team from Manitoba? This project, regardless of what we say about it, it is impacting lives on an immeasurable scale. It cannot be quantified into a simple report. All the impacts heard from First Nations yesterday are more than just stories. For this project to send people from out of province to sit with the Nations today, how can you quantify what the projects like this are doing on the ground? It is demoralizing to hear. You cannot come in here and determine our fates and futures for us. We must take the brunt of the decisions that Canada is making for us. We have the ability to think for ourselves. You are telling us what to do and you cannot play with our lives like that. When you talk about mitigations and impacts, we already told you what they will be, but they are not coming from western scientists and do not have diplomas from accredited universities. We already have told you what the impacts have been, but it is not taken seriously because it is an Indigenous perspective. What about the Indigenous Nations, why are we not suing Canada and Manitoba?

We are getting stepped on. We must come together and oppose projects like this. Where was everyone when we were seeing impacts within the communities?

**Peguis First Nation:** We talk about respect and reconciliation. Reconciliation is that we are the keepers of the land. No government should make decisions for us that we never gave up. I call upon my brothers to form a Nation. The government is going to meet head on with the landowners because we never gave those rights away. Reconciliation at the foremost, if they followed our treaty rights that were given to us, we signed an agreement with the Queen. You are supposed to be in partnership with us, under our Aboriginal Treaty Rights. We talk about climate change and environmental issues. I am a hunter and trapper. I do not have it on a piece of paper. We have connections to the land. You do not have that respect for Mother Earth. The most powerful thing is water. The water is our livelihood, and you are playing with something that is so sacred and important to us. Anything that happens in the south affects us in the north. The farmers are spraying pesticides, and, in the spring, it will run off into the north and affect the Indigenous Nations. The Creator gave us two gifts, spirit, and the gift of voice. We are still playing with our Mother Nature's life. I pray every night and ask the spirit for a better life for our grandchildren. We do not look at greed. You should think about that. You are leaving behind a legacy of destruction. If you have a heart and spirit, what legacy are you leaving for your children and grandchildren. The economic development will crash eventually. Our people can see a lot further than humans. The truth is the truth. I speak because you are hurting my grandchildren. The sacredness of the land and water, I do not care if I live in the south. Life is what you are playing with right now. As a Nation, we need to come together as people. We need to fight for the younger people. We are people of the land, and people of the spirit. By taking the water away, you are taking the life away from us.

**Pimicikamak Okimawin:** All the poison will go into the water. The people up North will suffer from the impacts from the water. It is already happening. About 700 people are in the cemetery over 22 years. There were 5 wakes at the same time. You know nothing that we are going through here. It is us that know about our lands and everything that we go through. Our ancestors survived but they said hard times were going to come. This is red man's land, and it remains. The northern people are going to get poisoned from the water and die from sickness. What we are going through here is that we are being killed off slowly. What is happening in the Middle East is like here, except we are being poisoned slowly. All that is coming from the south, and they are speeding up the channels. All that is taking place is due to economics. The people down south are the ones who benefit. The governments are doing it at the expense of our misery. I ask that it stops, but I do not think it will. The government does not listen. I recommend for First Nations to file a lawsuit right now.

**Peguis First Nation:** After years, we are still not finished our Section 35 consultation process. There is no consistency with the federal government. We have information requests that are pending. We understand that IAAC does not make the decision here. There are several federal bodies involved in this project. The Environmental Impact Statement is not the same scope of work that there is now. This will be the basis of our judicial review. There is a control structure

from Lake Manitoba, and it is 7 meters deep. Lake St. Martin is a 2-basin lake. The east basin will be impacted when the channel is being used to drop off water into Lake Winnipeg. One of the things we have asked the province, is what would the impacts be on local wells and immediate area. How will it impact our drinking water? The province told us that it would not impact our drinking water. We are getting ready to launch a judicial review of this project. The documents we had to review were thousands of pages in only 30 days. Our experts that we hire to help with IAAC and Manitoba costs a lot. The funding does not even come close to covering it. We are in a deficit. We are not being treated fairly. If you draft a final report in the next few months, we have not finished Section 35. The decision-making on the Project would interrupt the Section 35 process. I am putting you here on notice today.

### **Lunch break.**

**Pinaymootang First Nation:** There was a different design altogether, now it is going to be deeper in the bedrock. If our aquifers are contaminated, who is going to fix that? What are we going to drink in our community? We had a boil water advisory for years. Now we are looking at the contamination again. Every decision here will affect our grandchildren. They built the Fairford dam, and no one was consulted about it. All the migrating fish could not make it over the dam. All the land is useless to us. We are stuck with it once its built, it cannot be taken out. They devastated the muskrat and beaver population. We are trying to teach our children the way it used to be. It was hard to find muskrat houses where there used to be a couple of hundred of them. These are things that have not been fully addressed. When you start altering waterways, you do not know what will happen. You cannot build a channel without proper studies being done. Will the new channel affect drinking water in the surrounding areas? There are uncertainties with it. For Lake Manitoba, the analytical model would not show impacts to the wells. That's dependent on Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI) though.

**Natural Resources Canada:** Our focus was on Lake Manitoba outlet channel. We looked at the surface. There is a feedlot run off, and it considered what the interaction may be. Things related to pesticides that have come out. These are commitments for the proponent to look at. It is looking at the protection of drinking water.

**Sandy Bay First Nation:** Will it affect the drinking water? It is a yes or no question.

**Health Canada:** It is all based on models, predictions, and the best available information that is provided. Based on the information provided, the impact was not there. They are not predicting an effect to groundwater.

**Sandy Bay First Nation:** Will the runoff affect the groundwater and drinking water? You mentioned that there will be interactions. There will be mitigations in place but that is after the effect. All I have been hearing is impact statements, they are emotional. When there are Elders and leaders that come to tears, there was a poll and majority opposed this. With that, we are dealing with the charade. I understand it is a process, but the process is flawed. It keeps slapping us in the face. We feel that hurt and we have been wronged. We talk about mitigation;

it implies that they did us wrong, but they are making plans that will make it less painful. That is what this mitigation is all about.

**IAAC:** We are trying to predict the potential effects of the Project on the environment. We understand there is overarching opposition. We are required to follow certain steps under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012*.

**Peguis First Nation:** They implemented these hog barns; the environmental act was limited. They only saw economic development. For the next few years, they spread manure on the land. From 1995 to 2007, they put in a legislation to stop the spreading of manure and hog barns. The snow would come down and the manure would settle in our water systems. It would cause blue baby syndrome. This was caused by nitrous. This was brought to the government's attention and there were many child deaths and stillbirths. The nitrates in the water would deplete the oxygen in the mother's womb. When they are born, they are born with a blue tinge on their face. If they are going to drill the relief wells in the channel, will they leave them open? If so, they are leaving the channel susceptible to runoff. Farm chemicals will be settled down into our water tables. What is going to happen to all those communities there? Once you contaminate them you cannot go back. Once the water is contaminated, it cannot be fixed. Did you ask the province, with all the work they have done, were any of the reports done during a high-water event? Or during the 2011 and 2014 flood? How do you know their science is dependable? In 2022, Peguis First Nation flooded. I am telling you there is no science that proves this channel will be successful.

**Misipawistik Cree Nation/Tataskweyak Cree Nation:** MTI is using faulty modelling. We have been saying this. MTI does not listen to this. Why are we moving into a conversation to move into mitigation when it was based on faulty modeling? The minister has the final decision. IAAC has power and authority for this deadline for MTI. We are in a process that is illegitimate. What can we do to help IAAC to say no this month? It is based on bad information, lack of consultation, and lack of science.

**IAAC:** There are going to be debates about science. When you put three scientists in the room, there will be disagreements. IAAC is hearing all this as part of our process. I cannot guarantee that everyone will agree with what we have to say. We are recording your views. It will be included that the communities did not agree with the project for various reasons. Trying to make a decision that is as informed as possible is important. We will communicate these messages to make sure the decision is informed. There will be uncertainty with these processes. When we are doing our analysis, we want to see the effects that are going to happen, and what could be in place ahead of time. The decision on the project has not been made yet. We need to look at what solutions can be put in place. There is a lot of emotion and truth. I do not understand what your communities are going through as I do not live in them, so I am not going to assume that I do understand it. We can speak that truth to the minister. We are trying to create a space where people can speak truth and we are giving a space to work together. We are not intending to use this against anybody. I am happy to take this on.

We need to have these discussions. We want to give the space to everyone. We are here trying to understand and move forward together.

**Lake St. Martin First Nation:** We have been impacted since the 1960s, since the water began to be moved. What is the driving force behind this whole project?

**IAAC:** The *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012*, and the federal legislation that is in place, the *Impact Assessment Act*, outlines the federal assessment process. It is project-based. Companies can propose projects, and IAAC is required to undertake an assessment on the potential effects of the Project on areas of federal jurisdiction. Integrated into the process is the Indigenous consultation process. Indigenous consultation is not perfect, but it is an essential pillar for these processes. I hope that I can contribute to the relationship positively. We are moving forward trying to make sure it is the most informed decision as possible.

**Indigenous Services Canada:** The project proposed came from the Manitoba 2011 Flood Review Task Force, to ensure there are flood mitigations going forward. The province is trying to follow-through on this. The province has legislation with respect to water management.

**Lake St. Martin First Nation:** The presentations keep changing throughout the year. You mentioned the Water Resources Management Act was amended recently. We were advised that this is the legislation that is the driving force behind this project. There are many changes to it, such as Section 28. There have been changes to benefit the public, which excludes the downstream First Nations. The legislation has been excluded.

**Little Saskatchewan First Nation:** The timeline provides a unique opportunity. We pushed very hard for it to be assessed under the 2019 Impact Assessment Act. The deadline is February 27, 2024, and MTI has not provided the information and studies. If MTI does not hit the requirements, it will have to be assessed under the 2019 Impact Assessment Act. The importance of this timeline is a unique opportunity to go back to the start, under a better act.

**Peguis First Nation:** Going forward in the channel, we worked many years on it. I do not understand why the government wants to tamper with the channel. Why not just make holding cells for this water and let it slowly move through? This was a recommendation put forward. This has to do with hydro, not flooding. This is the bottom line; the government wants another hydro dam. That is all this is about. Why not just build holding tanks (burs)? Instead of destroying everything else and everything north. I would like to leave the land as natural as it is. Why have you not listened to a word we said? The bigger picture is they want another hydro dam. They are striving for hydro, a big settlement. I have been brought up on the land. With free-flowing water, it will impact everyone in the north. Why did the government not build cells when it was asked for in 2013? We told them back then and they are still not listening today. Let the water slowly regenerate down. As a knowledge keeper, we do not need a white piece of paper. There is no spirit when it is written down. We use the sacredness of spirit and intent. Holding cells will protect everything.

**Non-identified individual from Northern Manitoba:** The lack of answers that you have been getting. You are not going to take these to the minister. I have been affected by Manitoba Hydro in the north. You are not going to get the right answers that you want. You know the effects that are going to come. You are already affected; you will be more affected later. They were not able to even give you any information. Do not give solutions to anything. They did not hear your solutions in the first project. It is obvious that no one wants the project. My kids, parents, and I all have suffered. Any communities that fall around the water will be affected. It is up to everyone to oppose it. The more solutions you give, the longer the project stays on the table. IAAC is not here to give you the full information. There is no rush to meet the deadlines.

**Tataskweyak Cree Nation:** Oral presentation is the same as a digital presentation. It is important to listen to the people. There are times that I see that the Creator takes us to where we need to be. This place that has been flooded was where my dad told me about the waters, which was given by his ancestors. Scientists can only hypothesize. There is no truth or fact in their hypothesis. No matter how heavy your heart is, and you work for our future generations, we have to put ourselves aside. When you look at how long we have been on the land and step back and look at how long you have been on the land. For time immemorial, we have had a Land Use Plan.

**Trapline 18:** We have only had two days to make comments, concerns, and issues at these forums. I wanted to do a quick review for the benefit of IAAC. In 2022, there was Lake of the Woods. Everything spills into Lake Winnipeg. Every time there is a flood event in the province, the government makes money off it. What we need to understand is that the Winnipeg River was natural. With the control structures, it backs up the water. Whether from the east or south, the province decides when they will open the Portage Diversion. In 2011, as the water filled in Lake Winnipeg, it was flowing a lot of water at once. The reason I am sharing, for every action there is a reaction. It is already at its capacity. With the new permanent structure, it will make it worse. The natural rivers are still flowing, and they are backing up. Depending on who is recording, there are different mechanisms for showing shoreline erosion. There are different technologies, and some companies use different tools. The technologies tell the different stories. Wetland restoration would be great. The information is limited because of the economic resources to do these studies. You need to have a meeting with the minister. An environmental audit and cumulative assessment of the whole system needs to be done. A risk assessment should be done on the water management practices of the province and Manitoba Hydro. In the north basin, there are 4 instruments that measure the water, but it is inadequate to give measurements. Why are there more tools in the south than the north? When you look at what's happening, no one is being consulted. There are changes in the traplines and hunting areas. It does not change the impacts that they will feel. After the cumulative impact assessment and adverse effect assessment, we need to look at decommissioning the Lake Manitoba and Winnipeg reservoir. If you decommission the reservoir, you will get 2 ft 2 inches. It does not matter where the flooding comes from. Without the reservoir there, without the flooding, the water systems would function a lot better. There would be less sedimentation, and less volatility. This project is not viable and will not serve anyone's purpose. There are 21 structures

built for control purposes and they influence water systems. Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg are feeling the effects the most. Every child matters. The minister needs to have discussions with the Nations. We are the only ones that suffer. Where do we go from there?

**Peguis First Nation:** It should be scrapped that is all there is to it. We do not want the project.

**Sandy Bay First Nation:** What about upstream effects? Sandy Bay will feel the effects from the runoff. Why are we continuing this? This is a charade. We start over with another presentation. We oppose the project. It is an honour to speak to the Elders and listen to their stories, I felt the need to honour them and share their stories. I am here to ask this group if we can have 5 to 10 minutes without the government. Our livelihoods are impacted.

First Nations that attended the TAG requested a closed-door meeting with no government or TWC representatives.

**Meeting concluded at 3:00PM. IAAC was invited back to the room and was presented with a declaration signed by some TAG members.**

**Peguis First Nation:** Water is life, not only will our resources be impacted but our way of life and our health. There is just too much at stake. There are many alternatives that are positive to all Manitobans if the Province would just sit down with us and discuss those alternatives with our experts, our traditional knowledge holders and elders. We will provide you with an avenue to eliminate and mitigate the flooding and keep our way of life and make sure we protect the natural resources and our livelihood for the next seven generations to come.

The Declaration reads: "We oppose the Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels. Our way of life is not for sale. We demand that the Project be halted immediately."

Indigenous Nation	Recommendation Description
Dauphin River First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This project should not go ahead until the damage from the 2011 flooding is settled.</li> </ul>
Fisher River Cree Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MTI has limited the participants in the EAC from each community to 2 people. This includes an individual from council and a land manager to be members.</li> <li>Fisher River First Nation will not accept this project to go ahead when consultation is not done.</li> <li>Consultation and accommodation need to be done before the project is approved.</li> </ul>
Interlakes Reserves Tribal Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interlakes Reserves Tribal Council recommends developing an EAC similar to pipeline development.</li> </ul>



Indigenous Nation	Recommendation Description
Keewatinook Fishers of Lake Winnipeg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to adjust the time frame on the project, as it is moving too fast to have consultation done properly.</li> </ul>
Lake St. Martin First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial and Federal Governments have failed in their Duty to Consult. Lake St. Martin First Nation will pursue legal action should the project be approved.</li> </ul>
Little Saskatchewan First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the project under the 2019 Impact Assessment Act.</li> </ul>
Misipawistik Cree Nation/Tataskweyak Cree Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructures modelling. Participants are concerned that the data is not accurate.</li> </ul>
Norway House Cree Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stop everything before IAAC considers writing a response on the project.</li> </ul>
Peguis First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This project does not respect rights under Section 35. Peguis First Nation has not finished the Section 35 process, which should be completed prior to the approval of this project.</li> <li>• Instead of channels, create holding cells for the water to move through slowly.</li> </ul>
Pimicikamak Okimawin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The IAAC must convey to the Minister, that it's not just First Nation reserves or lands, this project affects the whole Traditional Territory.</li> <li>• Recommendations for First Nations to seek a legal review of the project.</li> </ul>
Pinaymootang First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We oppose strongly to this project.</li> </ul>
Poplar River First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendation is to pay attention to what the First Nations are saying. The IAAC needs to listen to what First Nations have brought up at the meeting.</li> <li>• Many First Nations already have Indigenous monitors in place. The proponent should not oversee training certified monitors.</li> </ul>
Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation demands to be a primary stakeholder.</li> </ul>
Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proponent should make use of wetland restoration, to address flood mitigation.</li> <li>• The First Nations should have oversight and decision making in the process.</li> </ul>
Tataskweyak Cree Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Manitobans should be represented at IAAC and included in the decision-making process.</li> </ul>
Trapline 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IAAC to connect with the Minister and recommend a meeting with the Trapline 18 respective leadership.</li> <li>• Commitment to providing resources for an additional TAG meeting.</li> </ul>

Indigenous Nation	Recommendation Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="548 243 1430 338">• An environmental audit and proper risk assessment needs to be completed. Additionally, it needs to be a First Nations driven advisory committee on that process.</li><li data-bbox="548 359 1430 390">• Utilize wetland restoration instead of creating channels.</li><li data-bbox="548 411 1430 443">• Minister to meet with impacted Nations.</li><li data-bbox="548 464 1430 575">• Conduct an environmental audit and cumulative assessment. Review the decommissioning of Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg reservoir.</li></ul>