



LAKE WINNIPEG INDIGENOUS COLLECTIVE

LWIC Meets with Deputy Minister of Sustainable Development

News

LWIC

December 11, 2017

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On December 1st, 2017, five LWIC representatives from four First Nations met with the Deputy Minister of Sustainable Development, Rob Olson, and his assistant, Jocelyn Baker. The First Nations in attendance were Norway House Cree Nation, Black River First Nation, Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, and Pinaymootang First Nation. This meeting was requested following the CBC news article released on July 6th, 2017, describing the City of Winnipeg's wastewater effluent violations from the northend treatment plant, and the application by the city to amend their license to allow for a rolling average on nitrogen-ammonia.

Link to the article is here: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/savings-wastewater-effluent-1.419...>

The City of Winnipeg's north-end wastewater treatment plant is in need of substantial upgrades to meet the current standards for water quality in Manitoba. The provincial *Water Protection Act* states that "The City of Winnipeg must-by December 31st, 2014- replace the northend plant, or make modifications, so as to ensure that the standards are met." Three years later, this has not been done. The current limit for phosphorus is 1.0 mg/L, and the effluent being discharged over the last three years regularly contains 4x this amount. Ammonia-nitrogen is also an important contaminant and is currently regulated on a 24-hour period. This ensures that sensitive species, such as fish, mussels and snails, are not harmed and that each day of the month, there is a hard cap on the amount of nitrogen entering the water. Using a 30-day rolling average to regulate ammonia would allow high levels to be released, which could have direct toxic effects on aquatic life, including the hatching and growth rates of fish.

Recommendations

LWIC representatives used this opportunity to call on the Deputy Minister to deny the license amendment and to include more indigenous perspectives into the decision-making process. LWIC also strongly pushed for the Province of Manitoba to take immediate and aggressive action to ensure that the City of Winnipeg upgrade the northend treatment plant to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus to below the specified limits.

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