

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPONENT: Rural Municipalities of Cartier, Portage la Prairie, St. Francois Xavier and Headingley
PROPOSAL NAME: Cartier Regional Water System – Rural Distribution System
CLASS OF DEVELOPMENT: Two
TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT: Transportation/Transmission - Pipelines
CLIENT FILE NO.: 4417.00

OVERVIEW:

The Proposal was received on February 16, 1999. It was dated February 9, 1999. The advertisement of the proposal was as follows:

“A Proposal has been filed by the Manitoba Water Services Board on behalf of the Rural Municipalities of Cartier, Portage la Prairie, St. Francois Xavier and Headingley to construct water supply pipelines for rural residences in the four municipalities. The Cartier Regional Water Supply System distribution network currently consists primarily of main pipelines which connect communities in the four member municipalities with water treatment plants at Portage la Prairie (existing) and St. Eustache (under construction). The Proposal would extend the system beyond the communities to rural residences. It is proposed that approximately 685 km of pipelines would be constructed over five years, serving 800 rural connections. Pipe diameters would range from 50 mm to 200 mm, and all pipeline would be located on provincial and municipal road allowances. Construction proposed for the summer and fall of 1999 includes pipeline to service 55 connections in the Lido Plage area of the R. M. of Cartier and 30 connections in the R. M. of Portage la Prairie.”

The Proposal was advertised in the Winnipeg Free Press on Saturday, February 27, 1999, in the Portage Daily on Saturday, February 27, 1999, in the Portage Herald on Tuesday, March 2, 1999 and in the Headingley Headliner on Monday, March 1, 1999. It was placed in the Main, Centennial, Eco-Network and Portage Plains Regional Library public registries. The Proposal was distributed to TAC members on February 22, 1999. The closing date for comments from members of the public and TAC members was March 26, 1999.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

The Provincial Council of Women of Manitoba

“This letter is to register our interest in regard to this file and to request that our name be down for information purposes.

The application raises the following points which we ask Manitoba Environment to address in its review and assessment of the proposal.

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The July 1, 1998 proclamation of the Sustainable Development Act puts more onus on all Manitoba government agencies and departments to specifically consider the sustainability of the proposals they handle.

1. Applying Manitoba's Water Policies, approved by the Government of Manitoba in 1994, Policy 4.1 Application says: "The Government of Manitoba will: require that demand management options be explored and appropriate options implemented before providing financial assistance to construct or improve water supply and wastewater handling infrastructures." The public should have full evidence that this Government requirement has indeed been met yet there is nothing in this regard on the file.

2. The first principle of sustainable development is the integration of environmental and economic decisions. The first guideline of sustainable development, the efficient use of resources, includes employing full-cost accounting to provide better information for decision makers.

Applying Manitoba's Water Policies, approved by the Government of Manitoba in 1994, Policy 4.3 says: "The cost of developing, operating and maintaining the water resource infrastructure shall be apportioned among the beneficiaries in accordance with their share of the benefits." The Manitoba Water Service Board proposal's 'Description of Development' (v) refers to attached cost estimates. These cost estimates, however, are missing from the file. No evidence of full-cost accounting or integration of economic decision making is presented. There is heavy government subsidization of this proposal. This information should be a transparent, integrated part of this licence application.

Pricing is an important factor in achieving this Manitoba Government policy and in increasing water use efficiency and reducing water waste. The Public Utilities Board requires that the price of water reflect its full cost. This economic information should be transparent in the proposal, if the Government is serious about sustainable development.

Under Environment Act General Terms and Conditions, Licences No 1662R (16) and 2358 (11), the licensee, CWP Limited Partnership, is required to submit to the Director, by March 31, 1999, a report on water conservation measures which are appropriate to the Developments. We request that the information on pricing be made public. As the earlier developments are part of this current proposal, the pricing data could be considered as part of the review for this application, as well as pricing for this stage of the proposal.

3. Under The Planning Act, the Provincial Land Use Policies Regulation 184/94 says, that one objective of the General Development policy [A.7] is: "to encourage the strengthening and growth of Manitoba's existing urban centres." A 1995 Rural Development Institute study, Impact Assessment of Rural Water Systems: An evaluation of Regional Water Services in Rhineland and Macdonald, finds that the principle effect of pipeline installation on land use changes is to encourage Winnipeggers to move to R.M. Macdonald (p. 61-62). The study authors recommend, "...that improved water service provision should be subject to much more integrated and comprehensive planning. The direct economic impacts of large scale pipeline projects are enormous, and land-use implications, especially around Winnipeg are substantial".

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The proposed Cartier Regional Water System is being placed in rural municipalities which abut Winnipeg and Portage-la-Prairie. Has an assessment been carried out to determine the land-use implications of water service provision and the impact on existing urban centres?

We hope that these points will be included in your review and assessment of this proposal. Would you please add this letter to the registry file as soon as possible?"

Disposition:

These considerations relate primarily to project planning. A discussion of the concerns was requested from the Manitoba Water Services Board on behalf of the proponents. The response is attached.

COMMENTS FROM THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Manitoba Environment – South-Central Region - No comments.

Manitoba Environment – Water Quality Management - The release of water when pressure testing or line flushing should be made to areas where residual chlorine will have time to dissipate and not affect receiving waters. All river and creek crossings should be tunneled or crossed during seasons when fish habitat is not adversely affected by construction activities. The department should be notified if surface crossings are chosen as an alternative for the larger flowing water bodies such as the La Salle River.

Disposition:

These comments can be addressed as licence conditions.

Historic Resources - No concerns.

Mines Branch - No concerns.

Community Economic Development - No concerns.

Urban Affairs - No objections or concerns.

Medical Officer of Health – Central Region - No concerns. This initiative will have a positive health impact for this area.

Natural Resources - A pre-construction floral and fauna survey should be conducted in the natural areas that are to be disturbed. No construction should take place during the April through July nesting and rearing period, if possible. There appears to be significant construction within riparian areas along the Assiniboine River. If possible, pipeline sections scheduled to pass through riparian areas should be moved to ditches and

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rights-of-way. Work within riparian areas should be carried out with as little impact as possible. Revegetation should be carried out with indigenous species or locally grown cultivars. There are some limited surficial sand features in this area. If these features are intercepted it is possible some local water supplies may be affected and construction difficulties may occur. Although it is difficult to determine, it appears that in some instances the pipeline will be very close to the outside bends of the river. Problems have been experienced maintaining the flood protection dikes along these outside bends due to active erosion. Additional bank stabilization works may be needed to protect the pipelines raising a concern for possible fish habitat loss. If directional boring of crossings is not possible DNR regional fisheries staff should be contacted well in advance of any open cut operations taking place. Care should be taken that contractors do not accidentally encroach within the Portage Sandhills Wildlife Management Area and Beaudry Provincial Park or alter drainage patterns during construction adjacent to these areas.

Disposition:

These comments can be addressed as licence conditions.

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency - PFRA will conduct an environmental assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. Environment Canada, Natural Resources Canada and Fisheries and Oceans have offered to provide specialist advice.

Fisheries and Oceans - DFO is concerned with the proposed route of the pipeline in the vicinity of the Assiniboine River. It would appear that the pipeline route encroaches along the outside bends of the river, most notably in the R.M of St. Francois Xavier. These areas are prone to active erosion and are the subject of flood protection dyke construction and repair. Should pipeline installation encroach the riverbank in these areas, additional bank stabilization work may be required which can result in the loss or damage of fish habitat. Although the project description does not list individual watercourse crossings, it would appear from the maps provided that the pipeline will cross the La Salle River and possibly a few of its tributaries at a number of locations. The La Salle River is known to support fish and fish habitat. However, the proposal to tunnel, bore or auger these crossings will minimize potential impacts to fish and fish habitat. It is concluded that the project is not likely to cause significant adverse effects after taking into account the implementation of the following mitigation measures: The pipeline route should be located at least 100 metres from the banks of the Assiniboine River, except where following an existing road allowance that is already within this margin. Should a wet crossing be required at any fish bearing watercourse, detailed plans regarding the methodology, location, scheduling and erosion control methods should be submitted for review and approval by DFO and Manitoba Fisheries Branch prior to commencement of the crossing. Where site specific concerns regarding fish habitat in the vicinity of a wet crossing exist, or if detailed information about fish habitat at the crossing location is unknown, a detailed fisheries and fish habitat investigation to further evaluate the sensitivity of the crossing should be undertaken by the proponent.

Disposition:

These comments can be addressed as licence conditions.

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PUBLIC HEARING:

As no public requests for a hearing were received, a public hearing is not recommended.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The attached additional information addressing the public concerns regarding infrastructure development in the capital region was provided. The response outlines the involvement of the Manitoba Water Services Board in demand management measures, and notes that pricing issues are within the jurisdiction of the Public Utilities Board. Comments are also provided concerning the MWSB position on further residential development in the Capital Region.

RECOMMENDATION:

All comments received on the Proposal have been addressed in the additional information, or can be addressed as licence conditions. Therefore, it is recommended that the Development be licensed under The Environment Act subject to the limits, terms and conditions as described on the attached Draft Environment Act Licence. It is further recommended that enforcement of the Licence be assigned to the Winnipeg Region (respecting portions of the project in the Rural Municipalities of Cartier, St. Francois Xavier and Headingley) and the South-Central Region (respecting portions of the project in the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie.)

PREPARED BY:

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March 31, 1999
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