



February 10, 2023

Department of Finance Canada
James Michael Flaherty Building
90 Elgin Street
Ottawa ON
K1A 0G5

Re: Pre-Budget Consultation 2023

The Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (LWIC) and the Lake Winnipeg Foundation (LWF) urge the federal government to **renew the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program for a ten-year period in budget 2023.**

Renewal of the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program is necessary to fulfill the Liberal Party's 2021 platform promise to "implement a strengthened Freshwater Action Plan with a historic investment of \$1 billion over 10 years" to "provide essential funding to protect and restore large lakes... [including] the Lake Winnipeg Basin."

Since 2008, the federal government has made dedicated financial investments for Lake Winnipeg. These investments have enabled both stakeholder-led phosphorus-reduction initiatives, as well as Environment and Climate Change Canada's own research, monitoring and intergovernmental relations to improve water quality in Lake Winnipeg. The previous federal funding commitment, Phase Three of the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program, ended in March 2022. Surprisingly Budget 2022 provided only a one-year extension to the Phase 3 program, rather than implementing the strengthened, historic Freshwater Action Plan as promised.

Previous phases of the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program have occurred over five-year terms. These short funding cycles have left gaps in data collection and research, as one out of every five years is dedicated to the program-renewal process and funding is not available on the ground. Renewing the Lake Winnipeg Basin Program in 2023 with a ten-year funding envelope would

reduce these resource gaps, enabling robust and continuous knowledge generation for evidence-based decision-making.

Improving the health of Lake Winnipeg is a well-established national priority recognized by the federal government. The importance of increased federal investment in Lake Winnipeg has been highlighted by ourselves¹, and more recently by the Green Budget Coalition², representing many organizations across the country and within Manitoba.

The Lake Winnipeg Foundation (LWF) advocates for change and coordinates action to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg. Our long-term goal is to ensure policy and practices informed by evidence are implemented and enforced.

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The Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective (LWIC) works collaboratively towards ensuring that our sacred waters are healthy, traditional livelihoods are restored and Indigenous perspectives are influential in the leading the protection and sustainability of Lake Winnipeg as a source of life for all future generations.

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¹ Lake Winnipeg Foundation and Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective, 2020. [Five Things the Federal Government Must Do for Lake Winnipeg.](#)

² Green Budget Coalition, 2022. [Recommendations for Budget 2023.](#)