

January 28, 2022

Hon. Jeff Wharton
Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks
Room 344 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8
minecp@leg.gov.mb.ca

Dear Minister Wharton,

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks. The Lake Winnipeg Foundation looks forward to working collaboratively with you and your department to fulfill provincial responsibilities for the protection of Lake Winnipeg.

Five decades of peer-reviewed research by IISD-Experimental Lakes Area has demonstrated conclusively that phosphorus is the cause of algal growth in freshwater ecosystems. Lake Winnipeg is under threat from excess phosphorus. As a long-time lakeshore resident, you have experienced firsthand the detrimental impacts of increasingly frequent and severe algal blooms – on tourism and recreation, local businesses and water infrastructure, quality of life and community well-being, and ecosystem health.

Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) – the single largest point source of phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg – is still non-compliant with the phosphorus limit set 17 years ago, in 2005, through Manitoba Environment Act Licence 2684 RRR.

The City of Winnipeg's most recent progress reports on NEWPCC upgrades are concerning, as no plan is in place to achieve phosphorus compliance at NEWPCC until 2032 at the earliest. This means that Winnipeg's largest sewage treatment plant will continue to pollute Manitoba's waterways with excess phosphorus for the next 10 years.

Thirty years of disregard for the health of Lake Winnipeg is unacceptable. Accelerated phosphorus compliance is required at NEWPCC to protect Manitoba's great lake.

Phosphorus compliance can be expedited at NEWPCC as biosolids capacity is expanded. Lack of biosolids capacity is cited by the city as the primary barrier to achieving phosphorus compliance using the approved interim phosphorus-removal solutions which were first

proposed by the Lake Winnipeg Foundation and partners in 2019. As capacity increases through the construction of Phase 2 Biosolids Facilities, interim phosphorus removal can be optimized to enable NEWPCC to meet the provincial phosphorus limit of 1 mg/L – much sooner and at much lower cost than the \$1.8 billion frequently reported in the media.

To this end, Manitoba Environment, Climate and Parks must amend Environment Act Licence 2684 RRR to require compliance with the 1 mg/L phosphorus limit upon completion of Phase 2 Biosolids Facilities. This licence amendment will clarify and confirm provincial regulatory authority to ensure that approved interim phosphorus removal is fully and proactively integrated into the design and construction of Phase 2 Biosolids Facilities. This will also ensure that phosphorus compliance is included within the scope of upgrade projects that are currently being considered for available federal infrastructure funding.

Lake Winnipeg matters deeply to Manitobans, as I know it does to you as well. Under your leadership, Manitoba Environment, Climate and Parks has an important opportunity to ensure the protection of this ecologically, economically and culturally important freshwater resource.

With the design of Phase 2 Biosolids Facilities expected to begin in the very near future, time is of the essence. The Lake Winnipeg Foundation continues to closely monitor all developments and to update our members and supporters on progress towards phosphorus compliance. Our community of lake-lovers expects transparency and accountability on this very important file.

We look forward to meeting with you to discuss accelerated phosphorus compliance at NEWPCC, and will watch for a meeting invitation from your office in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alexis Kanu". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alexis Kanu, PhD
Executive Director