



Release

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FLOODWAY EXPANSION PROJECT RECEIVES GREEN LIGHT TO BEGIN CONSTRUCTION

Project Clears Major Milestone in Environmental Review Process

Winnipeg, MB – Today, the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) has announced that it has received federal and provincial environmental approvals to begin construction on the Red River Floodway Expansion Project.

“Recent events have reinforced the importance of the floodway in protecting the Manitoba economy and our environment from serious floods,” said Reg Alcock, President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board. “By providing a 1-in-700 year flood protection for Winnipeg, West St. Paul and East St. Paul, the expanded floodway will result in significant long lasting social, economic and environmental benefits for generations to come. I am pleased that the Manitoba Floodway Authority has committed to fulfilling the conditions of the federal environmental review, so that work can begin.”

“As part of its environmental assessment process, the MFA has undertaken an extensive public consultation process which has included dialogue with non-governmental organizations, local municipalities, Aboriginal organizations, and members of the public,” said Steve Ashton, Minister of Water Stewardship. “The public’s input has resulted in significant improvements to the project including groundwater protection, erosion control and habitat protection. Today’s announcement recognizes these improvements and the efforts of the MFA in protecting the environment as the project moves forward.”

“In addition to improving flood protection, the floodway expansion project is an environmental protection project that will have long-lasting benefits for all Manitobans,” said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of the MFA. “Over the last two years, the MFA and its environmental consultants have been working closely with federal and provincial regulators to meet all of the requirements under the co-operative environmental review process. Receiving the green light to proceed with the project is a major milestone for the project and we look forward to starting construction in the very near future.”

In accordance with the *Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Environmental Assessment Co-operation*, Canada and Manitoba participated in an extensive co-operative review of the floodway project. As part of this process, the Government of Canada issued a Screening Report on the project in late May for public review. In addition, the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission (CEC) conducted four weeks of public hearings on the project in February and, subsequently, issued a report to the Manitoba Minister of Conservation on the project. Today, Manitoba Conservation issued a license to the floodway and the Government of Canada concluded that the project is unlikely to cause significant environmental effects, given appropriate mitigation measures. The MFA is committed to taking federal and provincial conditions for environmental approval fully into account in the project.

Gilroy thanked the public, non-governmental organizations, federal, provincial and municipal officials, the CEC, and all those who participated in the environmental licensing process. "We look forward to continuing to work together as we move forward with this critical project," said Gilroy

Construction on the project is scheduled to begin later this month and is scheduled to occur over five years. The project is scheduled to provide a 1-in-700 year level of flood protection for the spring of 2009 with associated bridge and related work being completed in 2010.

The existing floodway was constructed between 1962 and 1968 in response to the 1950 Red River Flood. Since its completion, the floodway has prevented more than \$8 billion in damages to the provincial economy – not to mention untold environmental damage. The original floodway was constructed at a cost of \$63 million.

After the 1997 "Flood of the Century", the Governments of Canada and Manitoba invested \$130 million in flood protection measures including \$110 million for rural Manitoba communities. At the same time, the International Joint Commission (IJC) reviewed flood protection for the City of Winnipeg. In 2003, Canada and Manitoba committed to expand the Red River Floodway and Canada designated the project as a national infrastructure priority.

The Red River Floodway Expansion Project will divert more water around Winnipeg during major floods by more than doubling the capacity of the floodway channel. By improving flood protection to 1 in 700 year level of protection, floodway expansion will protect more than 450,000 Manitobans, over 140,000 homes, over 8,000 businesses and prevent more than \$12 billion in damages to the provincial economy.

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