



Release

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FLOODWAY AUTHORITY WELCOMES FEDERAL REPORT ON EXPANSION PROJECT

Report Confirms Environmental Impact Statement Conclusion: Gilroy

Winnipeg, MB – Today, the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) welcomed the release of the Federal Screening Report on the Red River Floodway Expansion Project.

“This report is a major step forward for this important national infrastructure priority,” said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of MFA. “The expansion of the floodway is unlike many other large infrastructure projects in that it does not pit development against environmental protection. Floodway expansion is itself, an environmental protection project.”

Specifically, the 320 page report concludes that:

Considering the proposed mitigation measures and follow-up program, the commitments made by MFA and the additional measures required by the responsible authorities, Infrastructure Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Transport Canada, have found that the proposed project, as defined in the scope of the project is not likely to cause significant adverse environmental effects.

This conclusion confirms the conclusion of the project’s Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), released in August of 2004, that:

The Project, after the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the EIS, is expected to create no significant adverse effects on the biophysical or related socio-economic environments.

“Over the last two years, we have been working closely with the federal regulators to meet the requirements of the environmental assessment process for the project,” said Gilroy. “We are pleased that the report confirms the conclusion of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).” Gilroy noted that last month, TetrES Consultants Inc. received an Award of Excellence in the Environmental category from the Consulting Engineers of Manitoba for their work on the EIS for the floodway project.

In addition to its key conclusion, the report also indicates a number of conditions that would be attached to a final federal approval. These include:

- Development of an overall environmental management plan that includes ongoing inspection and stakeholder participation;

- Ongoing reporting requirements to federal responsible agencies, particularly Infrastructure Canada, Transport Canada and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans;
- Development and investment in local fish habitat and conservation plans;
- Safety measures regarding navigable waters associated with the project components (Inlet and Outlet Control Structures, Seine River Siphon, and Prairie Grove Road Culvert);
- Implementation of groundwater protection plans.

“The conditions outlined in the report appear to be manageable and are consistent with our overall plan,” said Gilroy. “In the coming days, we will have an opportunity for a more extensive review of the report. This will be complimented by the upcoming release of the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission report.”

The federal environmental assessment of the proposed Red River Floodway Expansion Project has been conducted in accordance with the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEEA)*. This assessment is required pursuant to section 5 of the Act before the responsible federal authorities can provide financial assistance or issue approvals that would enable the Project to proceed.

The scope of the project that has been assessed includes:

- expanding the existing floodway channel
- modifying the existing West Dyke & East Embankment
- enlarging the existing Floodway Outlet Structure & improvements to the current Inlet control structure
- operations of the Floodway
- modifying the existing Seine River Siphon & City of Winnipeg Aqueducts
- modifying or replacing rail & highway bridges
- electrical transmission lines and miscellaneous infrastructure crossings of the existing Floodway Channel
- fortifying riverbank protection
- replacing or modifying culverts and drainage structures in select locations

“Throughout our ongoing public consultation process we have been committed to an inclusive and informative process with residents and key stakeholders,” said Gilroy. “We are listening and look forward to an ongoing positive dialogue in the years ahead.”

The federal report will be available for public review and comment until June 22, 2005. Once the review is completed, Canada will be in a position to provide authorization for the project. Pending environmental approval, construction on the Red River Floodway expansion project is scheduled to begin this summer.

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. Canada and Manitoba have confirmed their commitment to the floodway expansion project.

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BACKGROUNDER

FLOODWAY PROJECT IMPROVEMENTS

- **Protection of Groundwater Supplies:** To address public concerns regarding the protection of groundwater supplies, MFA has outlined a five-point Groundwater Protection Strategy that includes no deepening of the floodway channel within the 48 km long channel. As a result, MFA will widen rather than deepen the floodway channel. Other components of the strategy include:
 - Low Flow Channel Protection
 - Establishment of an Environmental Mitigation Fund
 - Ongoing Monitoring
 - Community Liaison
- **Environmental Mitigation Fund:** In response to concerns raised by the public, the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) has established an \$11 million environmental mitigation fund to address unanticipated environmental effects associated with the Floodway Expansion project.
- **Erosion Control:** In response to public concerns about erosion raised by residents north of the floodway, a new state-of-the-art Floodway Outlet Control Structure will be designed to reduce water velocities and dissipate waves re-entering the Red River. In addition, approximately 1 kilometre of rip rap or other erosion control measure will be applied to the west bank of the Red River across from the Outlet.
- **Fish Protection:** To facilitate the movement of water and improve fish passage through the low flow channel during periods of low water, measures will be undertaken, including armouring and regrading, to re-establish the grade of the low flow channel.
- **Improved Transportation Links:** Six highway bridge crossings that cross the floodway will be completely replaced with upgraded structures at the following locations:
 - St. Mary's Road, PR 200
 - PTH 59 South
 - Trans Canada Highway East
 - PTH 15
 - PTH 59 North
 - PTH 44
- **Highway 15 Bridge Improvements:** In response to safety concerns raised by residents of the Rural Municipality of Springfield, MFA is planning for the four-lane twinning of PTH 15 bridge in anticipation of future traffic flows.
- **Improved Drainage Capacity:** Improvements were made to the design of agricultural drainage drop structures that are being replaced so they could accommodate increased flows and future growth of the local drainage system. The following improvements will be made:
 - Replacement of Centreline Drain drop structure
 - Replacement of North Bibeau Drain drop structure
 - Repairing the Cooks Creek Diversion drop structure
 - Replacement of the Springfield Road Drain drop structure
 - Replacement of the Skholny Drain drop structure
 - Replacement of Ashfield Drain drop structure
 - Replacement of the Kildare trunk-Transcona sewer Outlet drop structure
 - Improvements to the Country Villa Estates Drain drop structure
- Other drainage improvements includes:
 - Construction of a new gate chamber on the Seine River overflow pipes to allow the pipes to be closed to prevent backwater flooding from the Floodway to Grande Pointe;
 - Construction of a new gated culvert through the West Dike southwest of La Barriere Park to improve drainage in the region to the La Salle River.

- **Land Acquisition:** In response to input by local municipalities, MFA has scaled back plans to acquire land for channel widening from 1,000 additional acres (405 hectares) to a maximum of 500 acres (202 hectares).
- **Springhill Ski Facility:** Project design and construction schedules will be adjusted so that the Springhill Ski Facility will not be required to relocate or close its operation during floodway expansion construction or operation.
- **Lockport Children’s Festival:** MFA will ensure that the project does not disrupt the operation of the Lockport Children’s festival site.
- **Compensation Legislation:** The Province of Manitoba has passed historic legislation known as the Red River Floodway Act, that is designed to compensate Manitobans who are impacted by artificial spring flooding in which the Red River exceeds its natural level as a result of the operation of the Red River Floodway.
- **Recreation opportunities:** MFA has released a “Recreation and Economic Development Opportunities Report” that recommends the establishment of recreational working group and the development of multi-use all season trail. MFA is committed to further discussions with local municipalities and recreational organizations about proposed recreation projects. MFA has indicated that it will not consider any recreation components that would require environmental licensing.
- **Re-Use of excavated earth:** In response to public suggestions to facilitate public access to excavated earth, MFA is examining options for a process to facilitate access to the excavated earth from the floodway channel.
- **Involvement in Design:** In response to local input, MFA is working with local municipalities and residents in developing detailed plans to raise the West Dyke and in determining the best approach to Floodway drainage structures in the RM of Taché and the Cook’s Creek Conservation District.
- **Ongoing Consultation:** MFA has committed to ongoing public consultation beyond the environmental licensing process, particularly as it relates to the West Dike, drainage, groundwater and recreation.