



NEWS RELEASE

"The Voice of Manitoba Farmers"
203-1700 Ellice Ave. Winnipeg MB. R3H 0B1
tel: 204.697.1140 fax: 204.697.1109
kap@kap.mb.ca www.kap.mb.ca

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City's Sewage Discharges Detrimental to Lake Winnipeg

Winnipeg – Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) is deeply concerned about the negative impact the City of Winnipeg's sewage discharges are having on the Red River, Assiniboine River and Lake Winnipeg. The news that the City of Winnipeg's South End Water Pollution Centre has been discharging up to 60 million litres of sewage into the Red River on a daily basis since Oct. 7 is very disturbing.

"It appears that releasing untreated or partially treated sewage into the rivers has become standard practice by the city, meanwhile the Government of Manitoba is not focusing on preventing or regulating these releases which are unquestionably contributing to the degradation of Lake Winnipeg," said Doug Chorney, KAP President.

The province is consistently singling out agriculture as the main cause of Lake Winnipeg's water quality problems while dismissing the pollution the City of Winnipeg is contributing to the lake. Farmers believe it is time for the government to come clean and focus on the big picture.

"We want Manitobans to know that agriculture and farmers are not to blame for the problems associated with Lake Winnipeg. We are applying manure or fertilizer to land through controlled, science-based, government-regulated practices, while the city is discharging sewage directly into waterways without any consequences," said Chorney.

The most troubling fact in this story is that the City of Winnipeg appears to have no regular testing procedure in place to detect the presence of toxic chemicals in waste treatment plant discharges.

"Clearly we have an unknown source contaminating the treatment plant, killing all the beneficial micro-organisms, and one can only speculate on what impact this will have on the natural environment," said Chorney.

The Save Lake Winnipeg Act will fail to save Lake Winnipeg because it singles out farmers while offering solutions based on incomplete scientific information. Manitobans need to know that farmers already must comply with an increasing number of regulations related to nutrient management and our practices which never include dumping nutrients into our waterways.

As farmers, we believe banning or severely restricting one sector of society is the wrong approach to solve the problems of the lake. Our families use the beaches of Lake Winnipeg too, and we are doing our part to help the lake. When Manitobans, including government officials, learn about the algae blooms on Lake Winnipeg next summer, we hope they will not point their fingers at farmers but instead start taking action towards comprehensive solutions that involve all stakeholders and address the challenges that face the lake.

For more information, please contact:

Doug Chorney, KAP President. Cell: (204) 785-3626.

Kristen Lucyshyn, KAP Communications. Office: (204) 697-1140. Cell: (204) 792-2661.

Keystone Agricultural Producers is Manitoba's largest general farm policy organization, representing over 7,000 farm families and 22 commodity groups throughout the province. Our strength is our democratic structure, and our mission is to represent and promote the interests of the province's farm families.