

October 25, 2010

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Members,

My name is Karen Friesen. My husband, and I and our 2 children, own and operate a family farm near Niverville. I would like to try to explain to you how the proposed Bipole III Transmission Route will affect our business, our home & our livelihood. This past July 29th was a bad day for us on the farm. It was the day that I opened a letter that informed us that Manitoba Hydro was planning to route the Bipole III Transmission line across our home quarter. It was the day that we found out by looking at a green line on a map, that it would run just to the south of our home that has been there since my husband's father settled in 1955, as well as just to the south of our poultry operation, our 2 hog barns, and the 160 acres of cultivated land it all sits on as well as several other fields that we farm. I cannot begin to describe the stress this letter has caused us. It is unbelievable that in a country that prides itself on being a democracy, a project the magnitude of Bipole III can just be dropped on us without proper consultation. I am very tired of hearing that there was a consultation process held across various communities. That may have been the case when Hydro was going through their three initial West Side Route choices but was certainly not the case with the far southern portion of the route that crosses from Portage south and straight east across Manitoba's most productive and intensively farmed land base. This portion of the route was on all three of the proposed routes and we were not informed until July 26th of this year. There is something wrong when families work hard for generations to build a business and a livelihood and then have Bipole III come along and try to force their

way across titled property without proper consultation. We will not accept the proposed route of Bipole III across our property. We are concerned on so many levels but this evening I will narrow my concerns to three.

The first concern we have deals with the direct impact this project will have on our farm. We have 2 livestock operations on our home quarter including a hog operation which includes 2 large barns and a lagoon that is emptied twice a year on the land the transmission line is proposed to cross. This is done with highly specialized equipment that uses drag hoses that are dragged across the field injecting the manure into the ground. They cannot be dragged around obstructions in the field and these outfits run 24 hours a day when doing the job. They rely on GPS equipment for proper application to ensure that we are following strict regulations laid out by Manitoba Conservation. We have always prided ourselves in running an operation in a manner that will protect our environment for future generations. We can't risk any interference with any of this specialized equipment. Our poultry operation is also located on the home quarter. Over the years we have worked hard to build our operation to where it sits today. We have invested heavily here in the past and continue to do so today, so that our 15-year-old son can take over the farm, which is something he's always known he wanted to do. I believe that you don't have a full understanding of the impact that the Bipole III Transmission line will have on many of the landowners. Approximately 29% of the proposed route will cross valuable agricultural land and alternatively an east side route would cross virtually none. You have in my opinion, had total disregard for the effect this line will have on some of our agricultural businesses and livelihoods. You have

under estimated the potential disruption of some of our major farming practices. Minister Wowchuck, I have recently read where you and others as well, have publically stated that only 37 acres of cultivated land will be taken out of production. If you look at the actual footprint of these towers on paper you are probably correct but in reality you know that this statement is completely misleading. The large equipment that we all farm with today cannot hug the actual footprint and you know it. It will be far more than the 37 acres and such a statement is completely false. As well, those familiar with grain farming know that weed control is a huge issue and that weeds will most certainly thrive and spread from every tower that stands along the route. This will be an ongoing struggle for us to keep at bay. You have also publically stated that land owners will be able to continue farming their land under the transmission line as they have prior to any towers being erected and still be able to aerial spray their crops as they do now, all while being eligible for easement compensation. This is simply incorrect. This line will cross the most expensive and most intensive farmland in Manitoba. A high percentage of it is cropped with special crops like potatoes, corn, and beans. These crops are sometimes irrigated and many are dependent on custom application of pesticides by aerial applicators and other large custom application equipment. How can you deny that there may not be some risks or disruption of these operations that are necessary to succeed on our farms? There is also the very real concern of the impact the line will have on land values. It is a fact that potential land buyers are already questioning land values in areas where this line is to cross. We could very well see an economic dead zone develop along side this line. It will have an

immediate affect on land values, there is no denying that. Once these hydro lines are up they will affect us for the rest of time. Compensation does not address these very real and long-term effects. No one can provide undeniable guarantees that there will be no disruptions or long-term effects to how we farm our land. Denial is not an answer and compensation will not address these concerns. You have under estimated the potential impact your project will have. This is not about compensation. We will not agree to the transmission line crossing our land at any price. We have far too much at stake. A better route has to be found. All but a few agree.

The second concern that we have, as do many others, is the long-term health effects that these huge transmission lines could have on both humans and livestock. The proposed route will cross the most densely populated rural portion of the province, as well as the highest concentration of livestock operations. I can't help but notice the careful wording in all of the printed literature put out by Manitoba Hydro such as "there are no **known** adverse health effects" or, "**current** scientific studies and literature have shown no **direct** link between human health effects and EMF." These are by no means comforting statements. This issue is of grave concern to us, the ones forced to live by these transmission lines. What happens down the road once the lines are built and either time or potential new studies do show a link to health issues? History has proven this true before with other unknown risks yesterday but known today. There have already been several engineers come forward with real safety concerns over Bipole III, but their concerns seem to have been either dismissed or covered up. There is all kinds of published research that

questions the safety of DC transmission lines. So again, denial is not an answer. It does not reassure us as the landowners, who will have to live by, listen to, look at and farm under these monstrous lines. I would like to ask each one of you how you would feel if you were put in the same position you have put us? This is my family's home and I can hardly bear thinking of this line along side our home for generations to come. The same holds true for livestock. No one can definitively say that there will be no long-term effects on our livestock operations. These concerns need to be addressed.

The third concern I would like to address is the impact that proceeding with a West Side Bipole III line would have on every Manitoban. The proposed west side line being 479 kms longer and having 893 more towers than the shorter east side route, will cost an estimated \$1.75 billion more. This decision will take about \$7000 out of the pockets of every Manitoba family and that figure is likely to escalate as costs for the project grow from initial estimates. The proposed Bipole III route is a terrible decision for all Manitoba taxpayers. It is time we all know the facts. This decision is wrong and it is time to let our NDP government know that it is wrong and they need to reverse their decision. Surely it will take less time to build a line that is so much shorter. After the western route was announced, even Manitoba Hydro's CEO Mr. Brennan said the western route would take two years longer to complete than an east side route. There are far more stake holders on the west side. From what I have learned, an east side route would have been greener, more reliable and up until they were forced to proceed with a west side line, Manitoba Hydro's only viable option. Something seems very wrong here. I have read enough

about the issue and spoken to many and have come to the conclusion that the decision does not sit well with anyone other than the NDP government including many Manitoba Hydro employees both past and present. After all, since this line would be carrying power from the northeast part of the province, would it not make sense to run the shortest, cheapest, safest, and most environmentally friendly route that would affect the least number of people? I believe as do countless others, that it is not too late to do the right thing. This current plan is terrible for the long-term interests of Manitobans and for Manitoba Hydro itself as well as potentially devastating to certain innocent land owners who have so much at stake. With these undeniable effects on landowners, the real health and safety concerns, and the impact this line will have on every Manitoban, I am asking you all, including the Premier of Manitoba, the current Manitoba government as well as Manitoba Hydro's Mr. Brennan & his board of directors to take a stance, stand up and do the right thing, reverse your decision on the Bipole III route choice and choose a better route. I know, as does everyone else that there is one out there.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening.

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