



Fast

# FACTS

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES - MANITOBA

January 25, 2021

## Manitoba Continues to Ignore Aquifer Contamination Issue



**O**n November 5th, under cover of the pandemic crisis, the Manitoba government publicly released all of the public comments and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) responses to CanWhite Sands Corporation's (CWS) silica sand project near Vivian, Manitoba.

Additionally, the Director of the Environmental Approval made a recommendation that the Manitoba Minister of Conservation and Climate not hold Clean Environment Commission hearings on the silica sand project because "potential environmental effects and potential mitigation strategies are well understood."

I am at a complete loss to understand how all the potential environmental effects and potential mitigation strategies can be "well understood" when the government of Manitoba steadfastly refuses to review CWS mine and unconventional mining method as part of the current provincial

environmental review process.

Even the government of Manitoba's own TAC has questioned why the mining method was not being done in conjunction with the company's processing facility. One of the TAC members stated, "the processing plant will require that the necessary supplies of sand be secured, we recommend that the approvals associated with these two applications be linked."

Making matters worse, it was revealed in a September 11 letter written by the President and CEO of CWS that large volumes of potentially highly toxic water from its unconventional mining method would be returned to the aquifer that provides potable drinking water to all of southeastern Manitoba.

This new information from the CWS ought to make the proposed silica sand development project a Class 3

there is an alternative.

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Development, as defined in the regulations under the Manitoba Environment Act.

Yet, the Manitoba government continues to treat this proposed development project as a Class 2 Development.

The Director of Environmental Approvals also requested that CWS undertake a public meeting to “address the TAC and public concerns that have been raised during the assessment process related to both the proposed sand processing facility and the sand extraction project to be proposed at a later date.”

On November 12, 2020, nine Manitoba-based organizations issued a public statement that said, “a CWS led public meeting process in no way meets the formal requirement to have the company submit third party technical information and data on their mining extraction method, and to submit said information under the Manitoba Environment Act, so that both the public and government experts can review the entirety of CanWhite Sands Corp. proposed development as one project.”

This public statement further noted that a CWS-led meeting “does not in any way meet the standard of a Section 35 Consultation process that must be undertaken when there may be an infringement on Aboriginal and Métis rights.”

Back in August 2020, a number of requests were made to the Federal Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to use his authority to review and assess CWS proposed processing facility and mining method as one project under the federal Impact Assessment Act.

The Federal Minister in a letter to What The Frack Manitoba dated November 16, 2020 made it clear to both the Province and CWS that the federal government had serious concerns with CWS unconventional mining extraction method when the Minister noted in the letter;

“The Impact Assessment Agency of Canada requires that CanWhite Sands provide all information relate to the Vivian Sand Extraction Project and its potential effects, including the results of any ongoing studies, to the Agency as it becomes available. The Agency will advise the federal Minister of Environment and

Climate Change should new information arises to suggest that the Project may lead to significant effects within federal jurisdiction. The Agency will further review new information with a view to determining if it warrants the Minister designating the Project.”

Based on the Federal government’s letter, What the Frack Manitoba has now filed a formal appeal with the Manitoba Minister of Conservation and Climate under the Manitoba Environment Act., requesting the need CWS to now submit third party technical information and data on not only its processing facility, but also its unconventional mining extraction method, and that all of this information be reviewed and assessed as one project.

While I can understand that Manitoba is in the midst of a pandemic crisis, it is not an excuse for the Manitoba government to completely ignore the federal government’s concerns, nor its responsibilities for ensuring those living in southeastern Manitoba have access to clean potable drinking water. His government should be held accountable for its inexcusable actions with respect to assessing and reviewing this proposed development project.

Finally, CWS will have to file a separate Environment Act Proposal for review and approval by the Province of Manitoba, for its silica sand mine, their unconventional mining method and related mining activities sometime in 2021. What The Frack Manitoba is again calling for a independent public panel review process for this review and approvals process, as this is the most egregious component of the CWS silica sand mining development project.

Link you our petition: <http://chng.it/z5z7zs7fXZ>

*Don Sullivan the former director of the Boreal Forest Network. He served as special adviser to the government of Manitoba on the Pimachiowin Aki UNESCO World Heritage site portfolio, and is a research affiliate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba.*

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References available upon request.

