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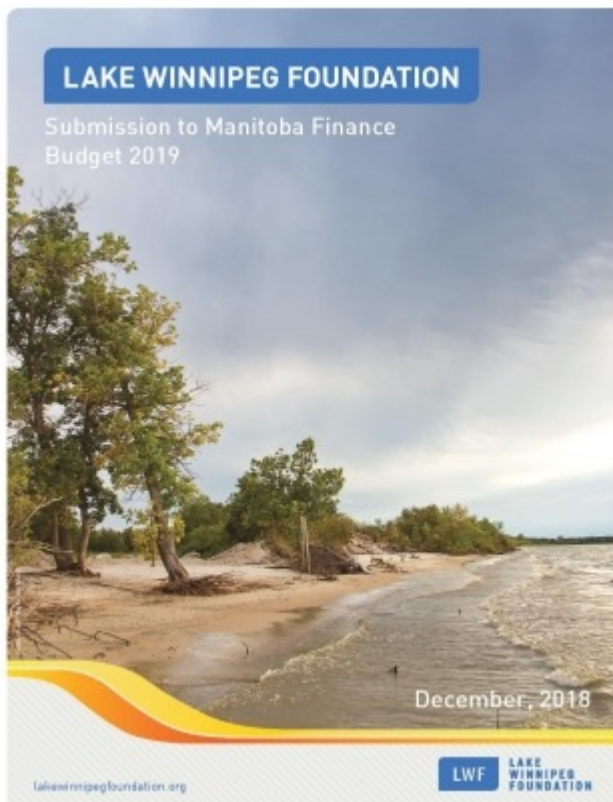
Manitoba Budget 2019: Opportunities for Sustainable Water Management

News

LWF

December 7, 2018

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In advance of Budget 2019, the Manitoba government solicited input on how provincial spending and revenue should be prioritized, and on innovative ways to save money. Our submission highlights the government's responsibility for the sustainable management of provincial water resources and recommends provincial investment in four key areas.

Protecting Manitoba's threatened wetlands

Ongoing drainage and damage to Manitoba's threatened wetlands has increased flood risk and severity, and reduced water quality. Provincial resources must be invested in policies that ensure no net loss of wetland benefits.

We are recommending strong regulatory protection of all Class 3, 4 and 5 wetlands via a province-wide drainage moratorium; a comprehensive provincial wetland inventory (including maps) to guide decision-making on proposed drainage projects; robust auditing of both registered and licensed drainage projects; and a commitment to evidence-based evaluation of ecological outcomes achieved under new drainage regulations.

Investing in Winnipeg wastewater treatment

The City of Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) is currently the single-largest point source contributor of phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg.

We are urging the Manitoba government to commit to a cost-sharing agreement with the City of Winnipeg to support an interim retrofit to the NEWPCC that will enable it to meet its provincially legislated phosphorus requirements. We are also recommending the Manitoba government enforce violations of sewage plant operating licences, re-investing any collected fines into wastewater treatment plant upgrades.

Data sharing

Annual online sharing of provincial water-quality data increases transparency and public trust, encourages further research, and accelerates our collective

ability to develop and implement strategic, cost-effective solutions to improve the health of our shared waters.

We are recommending investment in a dedicated water-data management position within Manitoba Sustainable Development to ensure that provincial water-quality data is available in a timely manner, and to support ongoing evidence-based decision-making by department staff and provincial legislators. We are also recommending investment in the staff time and resources needed to complete and publish a full technical report on the state of Lake Winnipeg in 2019.

Preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species

The recent arrival of zebra mussels signals a new reality for aquatic invasive species management and prevention in Manitoba. Zebra mussels are expected to impact aquatic ecosystems, increase maintenance costs of water-related infrastructure, and negatively affect Manitoba's tourism and recreation industries.

We are recommending investment in additional human resources to ensure effective monitoring, education and implementation of prevention programs, to both limit the spread of zebra mussels and prevent the establishment of quagga mussels, another invasive species not yet in Manitoba. We are also advocating for enforcement of legislation preventing the transport and possession of aquatic invasive species, with fines collected re-invested in decontamination equipment and/or subsidies to affected communities.

[Click here](#) to read our full Manitoba Budget 2019 submission. To see more of our recent policy submissions, [click here](#).

Proposed drainage regulations: Your opportunity to speak up for water

In late November, the Manitoba government launched consultations on a [draft regulation guiding water drainage and water control projects](#). LWF will be submitting detailed recommendations on proposed drainage regulations. We encourage lake-lovers to take part in this process, as well. Let the government know the health of Lake Winnipeg matters to you. Affirm your support for:

- A province-wide drainage moratorium on all Class 3, 4 and 5 wetlands to protect existing natural infrastructure and reduce the costs of flood, drought and water quality deterioration;
- A comprehensive provincial wetland inventory and publication of wetland-classification maps to guide decision-making;
- Financial and human resources to enable a robust auditing program of both registered and licensed drainage projects; and
- Planning for a five-year, evidence-based evaluation of ecological outcomes achieved under newly proposed drainage regulations.

The deadline for feedback is Jan. 19, 2019. Submissions can be sent by email to drainage@gov.mb.ca or mailed to:

Attention: Drainage Consultation
Manitoba Sustainable Development
Box 16 - 200 Saulteaux Cres
Winnipeg, MB
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