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Take action by May 12: Livestock manure regulations

News
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The government of Manitoba is proposing changes to the legislation and regulation that govern Manitoba's hog industry, laying the groundwork for industry expansion.

A public consultation process is currently underway with respect to proposed amendments to the Livestock Manure and Mortalities Management Regulation (LMMMR), which dictate where, when and how livestock manure can be used as an agricultural fertilizer.

This is an opportunity for lake-lovers to speak up for the health of local water.

Before undertaking any amendments to the LMMMR and associated legislation, the government of Manitoba must provide robust evidence to Manitobans to demonstrate that increased manure application to agricultural fields – as a result of expansion of the hog industry – will not increase phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg.

Currently, Manitoba is the largest pig-producing province in Canada, with 29 per cent of the nation's pig production, or just over eight million pigs marketed annually. The estimated value of the pigs produced in Manitoba is over \$1 billion annually.

We acknowledge the economic importance of this industry to local producers, communities and the province. To maintain long-term environmental sustainability, any expansion of this industry must be undertaken in a manner that safeguards Manitoba's water resources, ensuring no increase in phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg.

The effects of Manitoba's current hog production on provincial water quality remain unclear. Current regulation enforces certain best management practices, including a ban on spreading of manure in the winter when the soil is frozen and cannot absorb nutrients. Other practices have not been evaluated for their effectiveness at preventing phosphorus loading to rivers, lakes and ultimately, Lake Winnipeg.

In 2007, the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission released a review of the environmental sustainability of the province's hog industry. It noted that environmental regulation must be evidence-based, and recommended that the province dedicate significant resources to addressing the many research and monitoring gaps to improve industry sustainability.

This has not happened. Instead, the most recent publicly available government water-quality data for Manitoba is from 2007, published by the governments of Manitoba and Canada in the 2011 State of Lake Winnipeg Report. With only 10-year-old data available, we can neither assess the impacts of the existing regulatory regime nor determine the potential outcomes of proposed changes. We won't be receiving an update until 2018, when the second State of Lake Winnipeg Report is anticipated to be released.

Manitobans must have up-to-date information on water quality impacts of current agricultural activities before moving forward with any regulatory changes. After all, without evidence, we can't be assured that appropriate measures are in place to enable the province's hog industry to expand without also increasing the amount of phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg.

We need your help: Speak up by May 12

Manitoba's government has launched a public consultation on proposed LMMMR amendments. Speak up for water by submitting a written comment via

mail, email or fax.

You can also phone, write or email your local MLA. Contact information for all MLAs can be found [here](#). (Not sure which constituency you live in or who your MLA is? Click [here](#) and enter your home address to find out.)

You don't need to be an expert to make a difference. Here's an example of a short-but-effective submission:

"Water is very important to me as a citizen of Manitoba – and as a voter. When it comes to the future of my province, I expect my government to make decisions based on evidence.

I understand that you are proposing changes to existing legislation and regulation that will allow for the expansion of Manitoba's hog industry. Common sense dictates that before any changes are implemented, we need evidence that conclusively proves that any expansion of existing hog industry will not result in an increase in phosphorus loading to Lake Winnipeg.

I strongly urge this government to collect and publish all appropriate data before making any changes that could jeopardize the health of our water."

Remember to customize your comment as much as possible. Share your personal connection to your local water body, whether you're a cottage-owner, a beach-goer or an angler. Aim to be clear and concise with your message, and be sure to state that you are a constituent when communicating with your local politician.

There is power in numbers. Every constituency office has staff tasked with tracking public input on hot-button issues. All letters and emails are read and recorded.

The deadline to submit a comment on proposed LMMMR amendments is May 12. The more we speak up, the stronger our collective impact becomes.

Submit your comments to:

Public Consultation – LMMMR Amendments
c/o Environmental Approvals Branch Manitoba Sustainable Development 160-123 Main Street, Box 80
Winnipeg, MB R3C 1A5

Publicregistry@gov.mb.ca

Fax: 204-948-2420

The province's LMMMR consultation document, as well as a question-and-answer sheet on the proposed changes to The Environment Act and the LMMMR, are available [here](#).

Want to learn more about LWF's position on this issue? Click [here](#) to read our provincial submission on proposed changes to the LMMMR.

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