



LAKE
WINNIPEG
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Update on Winnipeg sewage: Provincial regulators deny city request for licence extension, commit to accelerated phosphorus reduction

News

LWF

December 6, 2019

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Thank you to everyone who has advocated for protecting Lake Winnipeg through improved wastewater treatment. We have an exciting update to share.

On Dec. 5, the Manitoba government denied the City of Winnipeg's request for a two-year extension to develop a plan for phosphorus reduction at the North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC).

Instead, the province is requiring that an interim phosphorus reduction plan be in place by Jan. 31, 2020.

The province will also assist the city move forward on plans to fully upgrade the NEWPCC so that it meets all requirements of its operating licence. One of those requirements is that phosphorus levels in NEWPCC effluent must not exceed one milligram per litre.

Excess amounts of phosphorus in freshwater ecosystems drive the growth of potentially toxic algae. The NEWPCC is currently the single largest point source of phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg.

As part of [its Dec. 5 response](#), the provincial government is requiring Winnipeg to participate in two newly formed committees, to be co-chaired by city and provincial representatives.

A project steering committee will be responsible for:

- preparing an interim phosphorus reduction plan by Jan. 31, 2020, to be implemented by Feb. 1, 2020;
- preparing a plan for complete NEWPCC upgrades by Jan. 31, 2020 that includes realistic timelines; and
- submitting monthly progress reports to be shared publicly.

A project advisory committee will provide ongoing advice to the project steering committee. LWF has been invited to sit on this advisory committee, as have our partners at the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective.

For the past two years, LWF and IISD have been advocating for the implementation of interim phosphorus removal at the NEWPCC. We are reassured to see the provincial government taking this issue seriously, and are looking forward to working collaboratively with the advisory committee to reduce phosphorus loading from the NEWPCC.

We are stronger together. We are grateful to our members and supporters who spoke up on this issue. Decision-makers have heard our collective voice. The efforts of passionate lake-lovers are making a meaningful difference. Thank you.

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