

## MANITOBA ELECTION 2023: THREE QUESTIONS ABOUT PHOSPHORUS POLLUTION

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Hello,

Members of the [Lake Winnipeg Foundation](#) (LWF) want to know how Manitoba's next provincial government will ensure phosphorus compliance is achieved at Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC), in order to protect Lake Winnipeg.

Excess phosphorus is the primary cause of harmful algal blooms on Lake Winnipeg. Winnipeg's north end sewage treatment plant is the single largest point source of phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg. In 2005, the province set a phosphorus limit of 1.0 mg/L in NEWPCC's operating licence. Almost 20 years later, NEWPCC remains non-compliant with this limit – and two provincial deadlines for compliance have been missed.

Continued delays in achieving phosphorus compliance at NEWPCC are costing Manitobans hundreds of millions of dollars. Earlier this month, an updated estimate for the plant's new biosolids facilities was released, projecting a total cost of \$1.035 billion. This represents an increase of \$123 million above the 2022 estimate for the project, which itself was \$360 million higher than the 2019 estimate.

Given the ongoing delays and escalating costs of NEWPCC upgrades, Manitoba's next provincial government must have a costed and time-bound plan for achieving phosphorus compliance at the plant in order to protect Lake Winnipeg.

In advance of the election, we are reaching out to all provincial parties with the same three questions about phosphorus pollution. We'll be sharing all responses online so that Manitoba voters can make an informed decision when they cast their ballots.

**We ask that you please respond to the following three questions by Friday, Sept. 22.**

- 1) Five decades of peer-reviewed research by the IISD-Experimental Lakes Area has demonstrated conclusively that [phosphorus is the main driver of algal blooms in freshwater ecosystems](#).

**Will your party's government explicitly recognize the 1.0 mg/L phosphorus limit as the primary requirement of NEWPCC upgrades, as outlined in the Water Protection Act? If not, please explain why your party isn't making this commitment.**

- 2) Cost-effective chemical solutions for phosphorus reduction have been used in jurisdictions across North America for the past 50 years, and can be efficiently integrated into Winnipeg's current NEWPCC biosolids project to ensure the plant is brought into compliance with its phosphorus limit no later than 2030.

**Will your party's government require that that the City of Winnipeg achieve compliance with the 1.0 mg/L phosphorus limit upon completion of the new NEWPCC biosolids facilities in 2030? If not, please explain why your party isn't making this commitment.**

- 3) To date, the province has committed only \$167 million – or 16 per cent – of the cost of the biosolids project, which is currently estimated at \$1.035 billion. Without additional provincial support, this project will be further delayed and have a direct financial effect on utility rates in Manitoba's capital city.

**Will your party's government commit to funding one third of the costs of NEWPCC upgrades to prevent further project delays? If not, please explain why your party isn't making this commitment.**

Thank you for your willingness to serve the people of Manitoba. We look forward to your response.