mayoral candidate responses

...to the question of Lake Winnipeg pollution and the interim ferric chloride solution at the north end water treatment plant, for the Winnipeg October 2026 Election.

background

Chris Hay is a Lake Winnipeg Foundation member and decided to email each of the Winnipeg mayoral candidates on Sep 8, 2026. Chris' email was based on his knowledge and a call from LWF social media to reach out to candidates to ask about their perspectives on Lake Winnipeg pollution and to commit to more full use of the interim ferric chloride solution at the north end water treatment plant.

letter sent to candidates

Subject: Support for interim phosphorus reductions to save Lake Winnipeg
Date: Sep 8, 2026

Dear <Candidate's first and last name>,

I am looking for information about each mayoral candidates' stance on the North End Treatment Plant and Lake Winnipeg, and ideally I am looking for a commitment to support more action now.

The Lake Winnipeg Foundation and International Institute for Sustainable Development have proposed that the North End Treatment Plant should implement a low-cost interim solution to reduce phosphorus output as soon as possible.

- *Interim*, as the upgrades for the plant have been repeatedly delayed, and now are planned for some time in the 2030s (but who knows). Meanwhile, excessive phosphorus continues to pollute Lake Winnipeg.
- To target *phosphorus*, specifically, because it is the limiting factor in creating harmful algal blooms in the lake. I actually work at the IISD Experimental Lakes Area, and this has been an area of intense research for over 50 years, with repeated scientific consensus that phosphorus is the nutrient to target.

The interim solution is to use ferric chloride to reduce phosphorus concentrations. This is actually already used at the plant, but not to its full use to meet phosphorus output targets.

The province has not required interim action, but it is cost-effective, supported by the science, and will help prevent Lake Winnipeg's continued decline, which ultimately, costs us more long-term. Public concern is high about algal blooms and pollution entering Lake Winnipeg. It is well known that Winnipeg is the largest point source contributor to the problem. Taking action now would certainly be well received!

Will you support timely, evidence-based phosphorus reduction at the North End treatment plant while the full upgrades continue? Please let me know, and I will share your response with colleagues and friends as we approach the October 2026 election.

Thanks for your consideration and attention to this important issue,

Chris Hay
<Chris's address and constituency>

Mazher ALAM

(mazher313@gmail.com)

Hi,

Thank you for reaching out and for sharing such detailed information. It is great to hear from someone working right on the front lines of this research at the **IISD Experimental Lakes Area**. Fifty years of data is impossible to ignore, and I appreciate you taking the time to break down the science for me.

To answer your question directly: **Yes, I fully support taking immediate, evidence-based action to reduce phosphorus at the North End Treatment Plant using interim solutions like ferric chloride.**

As a social worker, my entire career has been built on listening to community concerns, looking at real evidence, and pushing for transparent, practical solutions. It makes absolutely no sense to keep pushing this down the road into the 2030s while Lake Winnipeg continues to suffer, especially when Winnipeg is the largest point source contributor to the problem. We cannot afford to wait a decade for full upgrades when a cost-effective, scientifically backed interim step is sitting right in front of us.

Taking action now isn't just an environmental necessity—it's also about fiscal responsibility. It always costs taxpayers more to fix a crisis long-term than it does to prevent it today.

I would be honored to have you share this commitment with your colleagues and friends as we head toward the election on October 28. If you or your team at the **Lake Winnipeg Foundation** ever want to chat further about how we can better protect our water systems without unfairly burdening Winnipeg families, my door is always open.

Thanks again for your advocacy and your dedication to protecting Lake Winnipeg.

Best regards,

Mazher Alam
Candidate for Mayor of Winnipeg

Johnny CALDERON

(jc@jcforwinnipeg.com)

No response was received.

Chris CLACIO

(chrisclacio4mayor@proton.me)

Dear Chris,
Thank you for reaching out and for raising this important issue. And it's nice to hear from another Chris.
Yes, I support timely, evidence-based phosphorus reduction at the North End Wastewater Treatment Plant while the full upgrades continue.
This is not a new issue for me. During my 2022 mayoral campaign, I supported the Lake Winnipeg Foundation's recommendation for interim phosphorus reduction at the North End plant. I continue to believe that Winnipeg has a responsibility to do what it can, within its municipal authority and based on sound science, to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering Lake Winnipeg.
There is also an important development since that 2022 campaign. The City brought its Interim Chemical Phosphorus Removal Project online in June 2024. The system uses ferric chloride and was designed to reduce phosphorus leaving the plant by up to 38% while the larger North End upgrades continue.
So my position today is that **Winnipeg should make full and responsible use of the interim phosphorus-reduction capacity available to it, continue optimizing that system, and maintain strong monitoring and public reporting while the permanent nutrient-removal facilities are completed.**
I also recognize that this needs to be done carefully. Ferric chloride is already used at the plant, but increasing its use has operational implications, including impacts on sludge treatment and the capacity of the plant to manage additional sludge. Those risks need to be managed through engineering, monitoring, and evidence rather than becoming a reason for inaction.
The permanent nutrient-removal project remains essential. The City's current schedule has the Nutrient Removal Facilities as the third major NEWPCC upgrade project, with completion currently scheduled for 2032.
I don't think Winnipeg should treat the permanent project and interim action as an either/or choice. **We should continue moving the permanent upgrades forward while doing everything reasonably possible today to reduce phosphorus entering Lake Winnipeg.**
Lake Winnipeg is one of Manitoba's defining natural assets, and protecting it requires thinking beyond a single election cycle. It is also why **Sustainable Future** is one of the five priorities of my campaign. That priority is about more than environmental messaging. It is about making decisions today with an understanding of their consequences for the next generation and the generations after that.

That principle is reflected in the commitments I have made during this campaign. I have fully signed the **Trees Please Winnipeg Pledge**, committed to the **People's Climate Mandate**, and on September 16 formally endorsed the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba's recommendations in *Weaving a Better Winnipeg: An Alternative Municipal Budget*, with my stated clarification regarding the standalone business tax.
For me, these commitments connect to the same underlying principle: **public decisions should create long-term public value rather than simply address the immediate political or budgetary cycle.**
Protecting Lake Winnipeg is one of those responsibilities.
I would also support continued transparency around the North End project, including clear public reporting on phosphorus reductions, interim-system performance, project timelines, costs, and progress toward permanent compliance.
Thank you again for reaching out. I appreciate the work of the Lake Winnipeg Foundation, IISD and the researchers and community members who have continued to bring attention to this issue. I would be happy for you to share my response with your colleagues and friends.
Respectfully,

Christopher Clacio
Candidate for Mayor of Winnipeg
ChrisClacio4Mayor.ca
(204) 333-1658
ChrisClacio4Mayor@proton.me
Linktr.ee/ChrisClacio4Mayor

<Chris Clacio subsequently followed up to confirm the reply was received and offered to clarify and expand on his reply; Chris Hay replied to thank him and confirm receipt.>

Tracey DREXLER

(elect_tracey@northmall.ca)

Address not found
Your message wasn't delivered to elect_tracey@northmall.ca because the domain northmall.ca couldn't be found. Check for typos or unnecessary spaces and try again.

<No further attempts were made to find an alternate email to contact Tracey. At the time, Chris did double check to confirm this was the email listed on the official City of Winnipeg mayoral candidates page. LWF cannot confirm who made the typo in the email address (Chris or Tracey). The email on the City of Winnipeg page now, as of compiling this summary, is: elect_tracey@northmail.ca (mail, not mall).>

Scott GILLINGHAM

(info@scottgillingham.com)

No response was received.

Brad GROSS

(509sold@gmail.com)

No response was received.

Umar HAYAT

(hayattumar@hotmail.com)

Dear Chris,

Thank you for reaching out and for raising this important issue.
Yes — **I support timely, evidence-based action to reduce phosphorus from the North End Treatment Plant while the full upgrades continue.**
Lake Winnipeg is one of Manitoba's greatest natural treasures, and we cannot simply wait years for long-term upgrades while pollution continues. If there is a practical, cost-effective interim solution that can significantly reduce phosphorus and help protect Lake Winnipeg, I believe Winnipeg should act now.
As Mayor, I would push for:

- **Immediate assessment and implementation of effective interim phosphorus-reduction measures**, including optimizing existing treatment processes.
- **A clear timeline and public reporting** so Winnipeggers can see what is being done, how much phosphorus is being reduced, and what it costs.
- **Working with the provincial and federal governments** to secure funding and regulatory support for both interim measures and the long-term North End Treatment Plant upgrades.
- **Independent scientific and engineering advice** to ensure decisions are based on evidence, measurable results and value for taxpayers.

My position is simple: **we should not choose between acting now and completing the long-term upgrades. We need both.**
Winnipeg has a responsibility to protect Lake Winnipeg for future generations. **We need action, accountability and results — not more delays.**
As Mayor, I will advocate for a cleaner Lake Winnipeg and make environmental protection part of responsible municipal leadership.
Hayat for Mayor Building a safer, more affordable, and more connected Winnipeg — together.

Kevin KLEIN

(kevin@kevinklein.ca)

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your thoughtful email and for the work you and your colleagues are doing on Lake Winnipeg.

My position on Lake Winnipeg and the North End Water Pollution Control Centre is not new. Throughout my time in public office, I have been a strong advocate for protecting Lake Winnipeg and addressing the challenges at the North End treatment plant.

When I served as Manitoba's Environment and Climate Minister, I worked with Coun. Brian Mayes and others to advocate for progress on the North End plant. Our government also provided additional funding toward Winnipeg's combined sewer overflow work because I believe protecting our waterways requires action, investment and cooperation between governments.

I believe my record demonstrates both my experience and my commitment to environmental issues. Unfortunately, I do not believe enough progress has been made on the environmental file at City Hall over the past four years, particularly given the importance of Lake Winnipeg to our province.

On the specific proposal you raise, I believe decisions should be guided by credible science, environmental benefit, cost, operational feasibility and the advice of qualified experts. I would want to fully review the evidence and implications before committing the City to a particular technical approach. I don't believe candidates should make specific operational promises simply because an election is approaching.

What I can commit to is that, as mayor, I will continue to be a champion for Lake Winnipeg and responsible environmental action. I will push for practical, evidence-based measures that can reduce the City's environmental impact while the major North End upgrades move forward.

Lake Winnipeg is too important to Manitoba to become an issue we talk about only when there is an election or another delay. It deserves sustained attention from the mayor and City Council.

Thank you again for reaching out and for giving me the opportunity to explain my position.

Kevin Klein

Joshua PAGDATO

(projectptkc@gmail.com)

Good evening, Chris.
Thank you for reaching out.

I support completing the permanent upgrades to the North End treatment plant, reducing sewage overflows into our waterways, and taking evidence-based interim action while those larger projects are being completed.

If the infrastructure we already have can safely remove more phosphorus today, I support using it to its fullest effective capacity. I do not believe we should knowingly continue putting preventable pollution into our waterways simply because the permanent solution is years away.

I won't pretend to be a wastewater engineer 🤦‍♀️ I will not dictate chemical dosing from the Mayor's Office. But I will absolutely listen to the scientists, the engineers and the workers who operate the system. I'll look at the evidence, and push for the cleanest outcome our infrastructure can safely achieve. Diligently. And with the upmost care.

Every Canadian city should be working towards less waste on our lands.

Thank you for taking the time to read my reply.

Have a good evening.

Noah REDDEN

(noahreddenforwinnipeg@gmail.com)

Hello Chris,

Thank you for reaching out.
Algae blooms in Lake Winnipeg are a concern to me, especially their damage to the natural ecosystem of the lake.
Your proposal is interesting and I would like to learn more. Do you know where I might find some research on using ferric chloride in wastewater treatment?
Depending on the effects of such use, I would be interested in exploring it.

Thanks,
Noah Redden

<Chris subsequently replied with more information>

Zachary Uminski

(info@voteforzac.ca)

No response was received. Zachary is no longer listed as a candidate on the official election page, and news has reported that he withdrew in mid-September:
https://www.ctvnews.ca/winnipeg/article/winnipeg-mayoral-candidate-withdraws-from-the-race/

Mike VOGIATZAKIS

(mikeformayor2026@gmail.com)

Dear Chris,
Thank you for reaching out and for sharing your expertise on this important issue.
Yes, I support timely, evidence-based action to reduce phosphorus coming from the North End treatment plant while the full upgrades continue.
Winnipeg cannot keep using future upgrades as an excuse to delay practical action today. If ferric chloride can be used safely and cost-effectively to bring phosphorus levels within the required limit, then the City should maximize its use now, based on the advice of qualified engineers and independent scientists.
As Mayor, I would work with council, the Province, the Lake Winnipeg Foundation and experts from IISD Experimental Lakes Area to ensure that:

- The interim phosphorus-reduction program is fully implemented
- Clear and measurable phosphorus targets are established
- Testing results and progress are reported publicly
- Funding for the permanent North End plant upgrades is protected
- The City provides taxpayers with clear timelines, costs and accountability for the entire project

Lake Winnipeg is one of Manitoba's greatest natural treasures. Protecting it is not only an environmental responsibility. It is an economic, public-health and generational responsibility.
The City of Winnipeg must take responsibility for the pollution it produces. We should follow the science, act now where practical solutions are available and continue working toward the permanent upgrades the plant urgently needs.
You have my commitment that protecting Lake Winnipeg and reducing phosphorus pollution from the North End treatment plant will be a priority under my leadership.
Thank you again for contacting me and for the important work you and your colleagues are doing.
Sincerely,
Michael Vogiatzakis Mayoral Candidate
MikeForMayor2026.com

Don WOODSTOCK

(donwoodstockcampaign@gmail.com)

No response was received.