



## Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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### **MKO Concerned by Ongoing Practice of Releasing Raw Sewage into Winnipeg Rivers**

**Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB** – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing this statement in response to news that nearly 60 million litres of raw sewage was recently released into Winnipeg rivers.

“With recent news of a record amount of nearly 60 million litres of raw sewage being dumped into the Assiniboine and Red rivers, our citizens have expressed concern about the impacts of vast amounts of raw sewage making its way from the City of Winnipeg into Lake Winnipeg and into the north basin and the Nelson River,” stated **Grand Chief Garrison Settee**. “The ongoing practice of dumping raw sewage is alarming. This has been going on for years and we are worried about the cumulative impacts this practice has upon Lake Winnipeg as a whole and the drainage of its waters into the Nelson River. MKO First Nations are rightfully concerned about the effects of dumping raw sewage into two major tributary rivers into Lake Winnipeg, upstream of their territories in the north basin and the Nelson River.”

First Nation citizens are troubled by the impacts this practice has on the water quality and health of people downriver from the City of Winnipeg. As most people may know, Winnipeg sits in the middle of the confluence of the Assiniboine River and Red River, the two major drainage rivers into Lake Winnipeg.

The MKO territory begins at the north basin of Lake Winnipeg, where several MKO First Nations are located. Beginning at Grand Rapids on the west side of Lake Winnipeg, which drains into the Nelson River, passing by the Norway House Cree Nation, onto Pimicikamak Cree Nation at Cross Lake, and onwards to Split Lake where the Tataskweyak Cree Nation and York Factory First Nation are located, and further downstream to Fox Lake Cree Nation territory.

“The dumping of raw sewage into tributary waters brings into question impacts upon, not only the environment, but also on the health of the people living downstream. The environmental impacts of releasing raw sewage highlights issues of nutrient loading into an already impacted lake, with elements such as phosphorous and nitrogen. For human health, there is the danger of e-coli contamination, among other contaminants, on food production such as farms and cattle. E-coli is a dangerous contaminant of water and food as we sometimes witness with food recalls and international trade sanctions. Of course, most of us remember the seven deaths resulting from e-coli contamination of the water at Walkerton, Ontario in the year 2000. These deaths brought an urgency and focus on water quality both nationally and internationally,” continued Grand Chief Settee.

The Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg need to examine and investigate the practice of dumping millions of litres of raw sewage into our shared water. There must be a technological alternative to this practice going forward and there should also be an examination on the cumulative impacts of this practice over so many years upon both the environment and human health.

“In this day and age of environmental and health awareness, this practice should no longer be acceptable. Our citizens are sounding the alarm as the original environmental stewards of Mother Earth and its land and ecosystems. MKO citizens continue to rely on the waterways. We want to protect the water for the health of our children and our future generations. It is our Creator-given responsibility to care for Mother Earth and our concerns must be taken seriously,” concluded Grand Chief Settee.

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