



Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MKO Condemns Hydro Rate Hike as Pimicikamak Cree Nation Faces Life Threatening Power Outage

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB - Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) is deeply disappointed following the approval of a 4% rate increase for Manitoba Hydro, announced at the very moment Pimicikamak Cree Nation is in a state of emergency, without power, and battling extreme winter temperatures.

For days, Pimicikamak citizens have been left without heat, cooking appliances, or functioning water and sewage systems.

Chief David Monias of Pimicikamak Cree Nation said the absence of long-term Hydro infrastructure replacements have led to this power line failure:

“Cross Lake is now facing a compounding emergency involving power, water and sanitation systems. Immediate, coordinated intervention is required to prevent widespread displacement, health impacts and environmental harm.”

And the First Nation has no backup power for a designated emergency response facility.

MKO argues the timing of the Hydro rate hike is tone deaf and that the approved rates implicitly accept real-world costs that are not included in the rates and that are being imposed on and paid by Manitoba Hydro's First Nation customers through Hydro's long-standing pattern of neglect of northern First Nations.

The rate increase comes just weeks after two northern First Nations, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (MCCN) and York Factory First Nation, appeared before the Manitoba Public Utilities Board (PUB) to show that the revenues and expenses of Manitoba Hydro that are reflected in the approved rates do not reflect the costs of Manitoba Hydro's failure respond to the states of emergencies experienced by these First Nations in 2025.

Both Nations presented extensive evidence demonstrating Hydro's repeated failures to ensure energy security and maintain essential services, as well as the corresponding failures of the governments of Manitoba and Canada to support the emergency response needs of First Nations.

Mathias Colomb Cree Nation (MCCN)

- Endured a 128-day evacuation of 2,200 citizens after wildfire destroyed the transmission line serving

Pukatawagan.

- Despite a fully costed and vetted backup generator plan, Manitoba Hydro and governments failed to act to secure this fail-safe measure, leaving the First Nation to secure private financing to buy the generators itself for future energy security.

York Factory First Nation

- Faced low water levels on Split Lake that were engineered by Manitoba Hydro, which low levels disrupted the “lifeline” ferry service four times since 2020, including a three-month halt to ferry service in the summer and fall of 2025, cutting off essential transportation links.

Both First Nations emphasized that Hydro’s revenue requirements and approved rates for service must include the real costs of ensuring energy security and emergency response, especially for communities “vulnerable to frequent and repeated extended losses of service” due to climate change and Hydro’s operational decisions.

MKO asserts that Manitoba Hydro cannot continue raising rates and being permitted to operate to maximize export sales and revenues while at the same time failing to provide reliable, safe, and equitable service to northern First Nations. Communities have and are continuing to pay the price for Hydro’s inaction through:

- Displacement
- Isolation
- Infrastructure failures
- Threats to life and safety

*MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee stated, “**First Nations are being abandoned to deal with energy emergencies with no plan, no accountability, and no commitment to energy security on the parts of Manitoba Hydro or the governments of Manitoba and Canada.**”*

MKO and affected First Nations are urging the Public Utilities Board and the Manitoba Government to:

- Deny further rate increases until Manitoba Hydro implements concrete, measurable commitments to energy security, continuity of essential services and emergency response.
- Require Manitoba Hydro to develop effective emergency response protocols that prevent prolonged outages and evacuations, including to invest in generators to power all First Nations when power outages occur.
- Ensure northern communities receive equitable, reliable access to essential services, including heat, power, water, and transportation.

Manitoba Hydro should not be permitted to operate without constraints to maximize export revenues and profits while at the same time First Nations bear the costs in reduced public safety, security, and lives. This must end now.

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Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba's North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.

