

LIBERAL CAUCUS COMMUNICATIONS

Manitoba Legislature, Room 167

Winnipeg MB R3C 0V8

Liberals call for Selinger to formally recognize and compensate for ARTIFICIAL flooding of Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin

Gerrard: "Legislation allowing different treatment for artificial nature of flooding near the Shellmouth Dam should also apply to Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin"

WINNIPEG – Liberal Leader Jon Gerrard disputed the NDP's claims that the 2011 flood was a natural disaster by demonstrating today, with data provided by University of Manitoba Biology professor Scott Forbes, that there was artificial flooding as a result of the operation of the Portage Diversion in 2011. Whether or not the flood was a natural disaster or artificial has been a central issue for Manitobans whose homes and livelihoods were sacrificed by the provincial government receiving delayed or woefully inadequate compensation.

Scott Forbes' analysis shows that in April 21, 2011, the level of Lake Manitoba was about 813 feet above sea level (asl). It rose to 815.44 feet asl on May 31 when there was a devastating flood at many locations, especially Delta Beach, Twin Beaches and St. Laurent. The water continued rising to reach 817.15 feet asl in mid July.

If the Portage Diversion had not been used, the water level on Lake Manitoba would have climbed only to 813.4 on May 31 and peaked at 813.83 in mid July. Below 814 feet asl, there would have been virtually no flood on Lake Manitoba in 2011. It is clear the Flood of 2011 was an artificial flood.

Currently, there is legislation which allows different treatment of artificial flooding near the Shellmouth Dam along the Red River south of Winnipeg. Where there is artificial flooding, a person may claim compensation where artificial flooding has damaged the person's eligible property or caused the person to have an economic loss.

"Concluding that there was artificial flooding should change the way the Manitoba Government approaches compensation and rebuilding on Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin" says Gerrard. "Compensation should be in full, as is the precedent in existing legislation on artificial flooding. In view of the widespread devastation, I believe that the government should also look at other aspects which are needed to rebuild communities and economies. "

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The Flood of 2011

Flood Report Artificial Flooding



The Flood of 2011

The question of whether or not there was artificial flooding on Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin is central to issues of compensation and rebuilding around these lakes.



The Flood of 2011

There is currently legislation which allows treatment of compensation near the Shellmouth Dam and south of Winnipeg along the Red River differently when there is 'artificial flooding' present.



The Flood of 2011

For example, artificial flooding with respect to the Shellmouth Dam is defined as

'flooding of a water body'

- a) That is caused by the operation of a designated water control work, or the operations of a designated water control work and one or more other water control works, and
- b) Whereby the water body exceeds its unregulated level at the time of the event



The Flood of 2011

Where there is artificial flooding, a person may claim compensation where

- a) Artificial flooding has damaged the person's eligible property or caused the person to have an economic loss



The Flood of 2011

For compensation when there is artificial flooding "a compensation award is to be based on the full value of the artificial flood damage to the claimant's eligible property or of his or her economic loss due to artificial flooding, as assessed by the Emergency Measures Organization, without requiring the claimant to bear a portion of the damage or loss."



The Flood of 2011

While the Manitoba legislation on artificial flooding specifically includes the area below the Shellmouth Dam, and does not now reference the Portage Diversion, it would clearly be shameful and inappropriate for a government to not include artificial flooding related to the operation of the Portage Diversion if it occurred during the Flood of 2011.



The Flood of 2011

Scott Forbes, PhD Professor of Biology at the University of Winnipeg, has done analysis which pertains to the question of whether there was artificial flooding related to the operation of the Portage Diversion in 2011.



The Flood of 2011

The evidence of Scott Forbes provides very strong support to the contention that there was artificial flooding as a result of the operation of the Portage Diversion in 2011.



The Flood of 2011

What this means in essence is that Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin were artificially flooded in the flood of 2011, and such flooding saved Winnipeg and the region between Portage and Winnipeg damage which could easily have been in the many billions of dollars. Because people on these two lakes took the hit to save so many others, they need to be treated fairly and programs changes as a result.



The Flood of 2011

Concluding that there was artificial flooding should change the way the Manitoba Government approaches compensation and rebuilding on Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin



The Flood of 2011

- 1) Compensation should be in full as is the precedent in existing legislation on artificial flooding.
- 2) In view of the devastation caused on Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin, it is our view that the government should also look at other aspects which are needed to rebuild communities and economies.



Figure 1. Actual (red line) level of Lake Manitoba between April and August 2011 compared to the forecast lake level had the Portage Diversion remained closed (blue line). Had the Portage Diversion remained closed, Lake Manitoba would not have reached flood level in 2011, and on May 31st would have been two feet lower than its actual level.

