

1. Improving sewage treatment in Winnipeg

Winnipeg's North End Water Pollution Control Centre (NEWPCC) is the single largest point source of phosphorus to Lake Winnipeg, releasing an average of 600 kilograms of phosphorus every day. This is more than three times the phosphorus limit prescribed in the plant's provincial operating licence – yet the city's current construction plan continues to delay phosphorus removal until 2035.

Manitoba Sustainable Development's Environmental Approvals Branch recently asked the City of Winnipeg to provide an updated timeline for NEWPCC upgrades, as well as "interim implementation options to expedite phosphorus removal in advance of full biological nutrient removal."

The Lake Winnipeg Foundation has proposed a cost-effective, technically feasible interim retrofit to reduce the plant's phosphorus release by 70 per cent. This retrofit involves a simple adjustment to the timing and dose of ferric chloride, a chemical already in use at the NEWPCC. On July 31, city officials dismissed LWF's proposal and have not provided a timeline for regulatory compliance.

As provincial regulator, how will you ensure the City of Winnipeg takes immediate action to address the NEWPCC's impact on Lake Winnipeg? What consequences will you impose for non-compliance?

Response from the Green Party of Manitoba: The Green Party of Manitoba supports increased efforts to reduce phosphorus run-off into Lake Winnipeg which would include mandating proper sewage treatment and water testing by all municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg, in the Lake Winnipeg watershed to eliminate the contamination of waterways.

Furthermore, the Green Party of Manitoba would take a stronger lead in pressing the federal government and other government bodies responsible for the Lake Winnipeg watershed to take urgent action towards establishing and maintaining effective stewardship of Lake Winnipeg.

With respect to consequences for non-compliance, the Green Party of Manitoba would work vigorously and in good faith with all levels of government and all important partners and stakeholders to protect and restore Lake Winnipeg. Consequences for non-compliance would only be considered after such efforts were deemed unsuccessful in addressing the highly negative impacts on Lake Winnipeg.

2. Protecting Manitoba's wetlands

Wetlands play a vital role in protecting Lake Winnipeg's water quality, filtering phosphorus out of runoff before it reaches the streams and rivers that ultimately drain into the lake. Yet Manitoba's wetlands continue to be drained and destroyed at a rate of 3.6 hectares a day.

Manitoba's Sustainable Watersheds Act legislates the guiding principle of "no net loss of wetland benefits." If achieved in practice, this principle represents an important first step in stopping Lake Winnipeg water quality from getting worse. It is only once we have protected our remaining wetlands that we can begin to make water-quality improvements through remedial action.

In November 2018, Manitoba Sustainable Development launched a public consultation on a proposed Water Rights Regulation. Over 250 submissions were received. Many of these submissions expressed concern that the proposed regulation was not consistent with “no net loss of wetland benefits,” as it erodes existing wetland protections and does not adequately compensate for ongoing drainage.

Will you commit to amending regulation to prohibit drainage of threatened wetlands? How will you fund effective enforcement in order to protect wetlands?

Response from the Green Party of Manitoba: The Green Party of Manitoba supports policies and practices that provide farmers with incentives to create and maintain wetlands on their property including (i) reducing the current farmland municipal assessment portioning rate of 26% on farmland converted and maintained as wetlands and (ii) providing farmers with grants to build water control and dam structures.

Furthermore, the Green Party of Manitoba would undertake vigorous efforts to protect surface and ground water by increasing enforcement of existing laws and regulations, and requiring that ecological sanitation technologies be adopted wherever feasible

Other measures, including amending regulations to prohibit drainage of threatened wetlands, would be considered after consultation with important stakeholders and partners.

3. Protecting Lake Winnipeg’s economic value

Lake Winnipeg is important to Manitoba’s economy. The lake’s fisheries are worth \$130 million, while tourism and recreation contribute \$110 million annually to the provincial economy.

Lake Winnipeg property values also make significant economic contributions. Properties around the lake’s south basin alone are worth \$2.5 billion and collectively generate approximately \$40 million in annual tax revenues, supporting vibrant businesses and communities on the lake’s shores. Dozens of communities, including First Nations and Metis, depend on Lake Winnipeg for clean drinking water, sustainable livelihoods and viable subsistence fisheries.

Inaction not only puts these economic assets at risk – it could be very costly for all Manitobans: a recent study estimates uncontrolled algae blooms on Lake Erie will cost over \$5 billion in the next 30 years, with the largest costs falling to the tourism industry and property owners.

How will your government protect Manitobans’ businesses and property investments on Lake Winnipeg?

Response from the Green Party of Manitoba: Manitobans’ businesses and property investments on Lake Winnipeg would be protected by taking vigorous and immediate action to protect and restore Lake Winnipeg as outlined above.

Additional measures that would be undertaken by the Green Party of Manitoba include:

- mandating the strengthening and enforcement of manure management regulations for hog barns, chicken barns and feedlots in the Red River Basin to eliminate manure run-off;

- legislating watershed reserves for the protection of domestic water sources and, within those watersheds,
banning logging, road building, pesticide use, grazing, and industrial development;
- mandating that all building permits for residential, commercial, institutional and industrial buildings include a water reclamation system so that only minimal amounts of treated water are used for toilet flushing; and
- banning mining of peat lands, which are the filter for Lake Winnipeg.