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**Presentation to the Standing Policy Committee on Water and Waste,  
Riverbank Management and the Environment  
Re: Biosolids Treatment Capacity for the City of Winnipeg**

Thank you, Mr. Chair and Councillors.

My name is Alexis Kanu, and I am the executive director of the Lake Winnipeg Foundation.

I'm here today to speak to Item #4 of your agenda, the report on Biosolids Treatment Capacity, which I know was also discussed at length at the last meeting of this committee.

The Lake Winnipeg Foundation requests that an additional recommendation be added to the list presented by the public service, in recognition of City Council's commitment to accelerate phosphorus reduction at the north end treatment plant. Specifically, we ask:

- **That Council acknowledge that biosolids capacity must be reserved for the effective implementation of interim phosphorus removal at the north end plant.**

The Lake Winnipeg Foundation, along with our partners at the Lake Winnipeg Indigenous Collective and the International Institute for Sustainable Development, have served over the past year as advisors to the city and the province on the development of a plan for the North End Water Pollution Control Centre. This plan includes two components: implementation of interim phosphorus reduction and the development of a timeline for full plant upgrades.

At LWF, we're focused on phosphorus – the nutrient that causes blue-green algal blooms on Lake Winnipeg. The north end plant's phosphorus load is a contributor to these algal blooms. **Accelerating phosphorus reduction at the plant is a recognized priority of Winnipeg's City Council and of its citizens.** It is also a necessary first step to protect the health of Lake Winnipeg.

To that end, the Lake Winnipeg Foundation is grateful for the leadership shown by this committee last year, when it brought forward a motion to implement accelerated phosphorus reduction at the plant.

In October 2019, City Council passed this motion, directing the public service to immediately begin testing interim phosphorus reduction options and to report back to this Standing Policy Committee with a recommended solution. Once a solution is identified, it is to be implemented within 14 months.

What does phosphorus removal have to do with biosolids? **Phosphorus reduction requires biosolids capacity, as noted on page 7 of today's biosolids capacity report.**

Phosphorus-removal processes concentrate phosphorus in sewage sludge, keeping it out of the liquid effluent discharged into the Red River. This increases the volume of the sludge produced.

Some of the north end plant's remaining biosolids capacity is needed to handle this additional sludge in order effectively implement interim phosphorus removal.

Over the past year, following Council's direction, the public service has worked with consulting engineers at AECOM to test interim phosphorus solutions. An aggressive testing schedule has been maintained throughout 2020, despite the challenges of COVID-19. We understand, through our role as advisors to the city and province in this process, that a recommendation on the best interim phosphorus reduction solution is expected to be presented to this committee in February of next year.

From that point, the clock starts ticking. Council has directed that interim phosphorus reduction at the north end plant be implemented within 14 months. **This means the interim solution will be up and running by April 2022, requiring sufficient biosolids capacity to operate effectively.**

We understand the difficulty that Winnipeg faces here:

- Within 9 years, our sewage system has seemingly gone from excess capacity to "looming crisis."
- We're squeezed between the demands of neighbouring municipalities and the province.
- We can't even get started on solving the problem with a new biosolids facility until the province and the feds give us the funding we need.

We echo the sentiments expressed by many of you, Councillors, at your last committee meeting. **We are in great need of a robust, resilient plan that meets Winnipeg's needs – a plan that will enable responsible growth in the City of Winnipeg, while protecting the lake that bears our name.**

The report before you today emphasizes that "residential growth, economic development and service sharing will need to be balanced until a new facility is completed." **It is absolutely necessary to add our environmental responsibilities to that balancing act.**

Accelerated phosphorus reduction at the north end plant is a commitment of Winnipeg's City Council, an expectation of its citizens and a requirement of the provincial regulator. Ensuring sufficient biosolids capacity for interim phosphorus reduction at the north end plant is vital to making that priority a reality.

Thank you.

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*The Lake Winnipeg Foundation (LWF) advocates for change and co-ordinates action to improve the health of Lake Winnipeg. Our long-term goal is to ensure policy and practices informed by evidence are implemented and enforced.*

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