

SUBMISSION:
To The Law Amendments
Review Committee on Bill 17
‘The Environment Amendment Act’



The Manitoba Chambers
of Commerce

Entrepreneurial Spirit • Community Values

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INTRODUCTION:

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce is the umbrella organization for Manitoba's Chamber movement. With a membership comprised of 75 local chambers and 350 direct corporate members, in total we represent over 10,000 businesses across Manitoba.

Our membership is not confined to any specific region within Manitoba. Nor do we represent only one size of business. In fact, the Manitoba Chambers represents the entire spectrum of business, from sole proprietorships to some of the largest companies in Manitoba. Nor do we represent only one particular sector of the economy. To cite but a few examples, our membership includes representatives within services industries, manufacturing, transportation, mining, information communication technologies, and agriculture.

The Vision of the Manitoba Chambers is as follows:

- Policy development that brings together businesses of all sizes, from all sectors, and communities across Manitoba;
- Non-partisan public debates of integrity, that criticize government where necessary, praise government where warranted, and disdain personal attacks and exaggeration;
- A business community that demonstrates high ethical standards in all it does;
- Businesses dedicated to the vitality of their communities, the prosperity of their employees and the sustainability of the environment;
- A province that understands the nature and value of entrepreneurship and promotes the competitive enterprise system;
- A provincial government with sound, long-term economic strategies that are focused without ignoring opportunity, flexibility and diversity;
- Government policies and spending that are efficient and effective, delivering the programs that Manitobans need and helping the disadvantaged; and
- A Manitoba that promotes the progress of all its citizens toward individual freedom, dignity and prosperity, and opposes any form of negative discrimination or needless control.

The Manitoba Chambers appreciates the opportunity to present its views in relation to Bill 17.

SUBMISSION:

The Manitoba Chambers' advocacy mandate is largely set by local chambers voting on Resolutions at our Annual General Meeting.

It is of note that for the last two years our membership has seen fit to condemn this government in relation to its ban on the advancement of the hog industry, first in relation to the complete ban of 2006 and now in relation to the partial ban.

Both Resolutions do a good job of setting out the history, significance and frustration in relation to the government's actions:

HOG INDUSTRY MORATORIUM (2007 Resolution):

Preamble: On November 8, 2006 the Honourable Stan Struthers, Minister of Conservation, announced that Manitoba's water protection plan would be referred to the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) for a full, independent and public review in order to provide Manitobans an opportunity for input into steps the province is proposing to protect rivers, streams and lakes.

At the same time he announced a moratorium on new or expanded hog barns. A specific date has not been provided as to when the moratorium will be lifted.

Throughout its term in office the current government has taken a number of steps to ensure the quality of Manitoba's water supply and the growth of the hog industry in an environmentally sustainable manner:

"...we have a comprehensive strategy to protect our natural resources, particularly in areas where hogs and other livestock are raised, or near plants where they are processed. **With these safeguards in place Manitobans can be assured that the livestock industry will grow while sustaining our environment.**" The Honourable Gary Doer, Premier of Manitoba. Manitoba Government News Release, **January 31, 2000**. [Emphasis added]

"We have been able to balance growth in the livestock industry with an increased emphasis on environmental monitoring, land use planning and data collection." Rosann Wowchuk, Agriculture and Food Minister. Manitoba Government News Release **January 22, 2001**[Emphasis added]

"Manitoba's livestock industry continues to provide opportunities for economic diversification for rural communities. Our government is committed to growing our livestock industry in a sustainable manner. **These changes will ensure that the land can**

support the growth of sustainable agriculture long into the future." Stan Struthers, Conservation Minister. Manitoba Government News Release **April 01, 2004** [Emphasis added]

"The Water Protection Act is a key element in the government's effort to protect and improve water quality in Manitoba. **The amendments and the act ensure the quality and quantity of our provincial water resources will be preserved for the equal benefit of current and future generations of Manitobans.**" Steve Ashton, Water Stewardship Minister. Manitoba Government News Release **November 26, 2004** [Emphasis added]

The ban was announced without prior consultation or notice to the industry. Nor did the Minister provide a scientific justification for the ban.

Manitoba has approximately 1,400 hog producers and over 15,000 people working in the industry. It is a \$1 billion industry in Manitoba that contributes more to the province's GDP than any other agricultural commodity.

Resolution: **That the Government of Manitoba:**

- a) **continue effective monitoring and enforcement of existing manure management and water quality regulations;**
- b) **end immediately the current moratorium on expansion of the hog industry in Manitoba; and**
- c) **work with the hog industry to improve manure management regulations to protect our natural resources for future years.**

LIFTING THE BAN ON THE EXPANSION OF HOG PRODUCTION (2008 Resolution)

Preamble: On November 8, 2006 the Manitoba Minister of Conservation made a request to the Clean Environment Commission (CEC) to investigate the environmental stability of hog production in Manitoba.

The Minister released the report of the CEC on March 3, 2008, at the same time announcing a further halt to industry expansion in:

- Southeastern Manitoba
- The Red River Valley Special Management Zone: This area includes the Capital Region of the province.
- The Interlake: This region borders on Lake Winnipeg to the east and Lake Manitoba to the west.

New and expanding hog operations in the rest of the province were allowed subject to new, stricter requirements as recommended by the CEC.

While the CEC made 48 recommendations, it did not recommend an outright ban on hog expansion in any area of Manitoba.

Further, the CEC report stated:

“The challenge for the government will be to develop an implementation strategy that works with producers and other members of society to ensure the industry’s social and economic sustainability. In those areas where nutrient production is currently out of balance with the environment’s ability to remove those nutrients, the province and producers must move quickly and cooperatively to bring production into balance within the next five years.” (p. 153)

The bans announced were not done in cooperation or consultation with the industry.

The CEC reported that Manitoba’s hog-production and processing industry generates 7,500 jobs in Manitoba (hog farming plus direct estimate for packing); total wages, contract benefits and other income of \$610-million; and total economic activity of \$2 billion.

Resolution: That the Government of Manitoba:

- a) immediately end the current moratorium on expansion of the hog industry in Manitoba; and**
- b) work with hog industry as the government seeks to implement the recommendations of the CEC.**

CONCLUSION:

The hog industry is a valuable contributor to Manitoba’s provincial economy. While the citizens of Manitoba have a moral obligation to preserve and protect society’s natural resources for the utilization and enjoyment of current and future generations, they also have a moral obligation to ensure optimal use of society’s natural resources in the pursuit of efficient food production.

Any of Governments concerns related to the Interlake and Southeastern Manitoba can be addressed through all the existing and new regulations that may come into place based on the CEC recommendations. To suggest that these regions can afford no further development ignores existing Municipal Land Use Policies and ignores the fact that each hog barn application goes through an intense permitting process that address Municipal and Conservation’s concerns. All though it is true that the Red River Valley is prone to flooding what the Government is ignoring is that any new lagoon would have banks high enough to address the risks associated with flooding.

The proposed ban will drive future investment opportunities and Manitobans outside our province. It will also needlessly expose the hog industry and the Manitoba economy to

unacceptable trade risks if another trade dispute or foreign animal disease event occurs without sufficient Manitoba investment in processing capacity. This investment is dependent on an assured supply of finished market hogs and faith that our government will not act capriciously.

Significant progress has been made since 1999 in regulatory reform, livestock stewardship and water quality protection measures, all of which ensure that the livestock industry (including hog production) is managed in an environmentally sustainable manner. These measures include:

- The Livestock Stewardship Review Panel public meetings and report, December 2000;
- Amendments to strengthen the Livestock Manure and Mortalities Management Regulation, March 2001;
- Creation of the Office of Drinking Water;
- Increased environmental monitoring and enforcement of livestock operations;
- Requirements for annual water source testing for livestock operations over 300 A.U.;
- Adoption of the Water Protection Act, January 2006;
- Adoption of the Planning Act requiring mandatory local livestock policies, January 2006;
- Completion of government's 2006 report "Examining the Environmental Sustainability of the Hog Industry in Manitoba", which did not identify any significant issues of concern;
- Strengthened Livestock Technical Review Committee mandate and resources;
- Final report of the Manitoba Phosphorus Committee, January 2006;
- Adoption of a new phosphorus regulatory amendment, November 2006;
- Proposed nutrient management regulation currently under public review;
- The CEC report made 48 recommendations but did not recommend an outright ban.

Given all of the above, there is no legitimate reason and no need for the proposed ban.

A prolonged ban will only extend the uncertainty and damage Manitoba's business and investment climate.

We respectfully submit that the Government of Manitoba:

- a) immediately end the current moratorium on expansion of the hog industry in Manitoba; and
- b) work with hog industry as the government seeks to implement the recommendations of the CEC.