



COMMENTARY

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For immediate release

July 2, 2010

Rethink Bipole III Route

By Ian Wishart, KAP President - Cell: 856-6964

The Manitoba Government is due to announce its preferred route for Bipole III, and farmers are very clear—none of the western routes are preferred by them. It is hard for us to understand why “pristine” forest is viewed as more important than productive farmland, especially against predictions of the critical challenges we'll face concerning feeding the world in 2050.

The province tells us hydro sales are important for Manitoba's future, and that customers will not buy hydro from Manitoba if we disturb pristine areas on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Frankly, I think the whole world will have to rethink what is “suitable” energy after the disaster in the Gulf.

Perhaps Premier Greg Selinger and his cabinet could consider an option used in B.C. to obtain access for a gas line through the “Spirit Bear” Preserve. Access was granted in return for an annual payment to the First Nation tribe for maintaining environmental services—like ALUS—and they also have the right of ecotourism in that area. Given the interest in access on the east side of Lake Winnipeg and the need to create employment, it is worth approaching hydro customers again to see if alternatives such as these can lead to a win for all Manitobans.

Keystone Agricultural Producers is Manitoba's largest general farm policy organization, representing over 7,000 farm families and 22 commodity groups throughout the province. Our strength is our democratic structure, and our mission is to represent and promote the interests of the province's farm families.