



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AMC expresses disappointment with SCC rejection of its application for leave to appeal unconscionable Manitoba Hydro rates for First Nations

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The AMC expresses profound disappointment with the Supreme Court of Canada’s decision to dismiss its application in *Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs v Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board* (Case Number 39377) concerning the Manitoba Court of Appeal’s decision to overturn the Public Utilities Board (“PUB”) Order 59/18. The AMC requested leave to appeal because the Manitoba Court of Appeal’s decision violates the principles of reconciliation and substantive equality and places unconscionable burdens on First Nations peoples.

Order 59/18 directed Manitoba Hydro to create a “First Nations On-Reserve Residential customer class” with lower rates than the general residential customer class. As a result of the Court of Appeal’s decision to overturn Order 59/18, Manitoba Hydro migrated First Nations on-reserve residential customers back into the residential customer class, resulting in substantially increased hydro-electric rates for First Nations residential customers living on reserve starting September 1, 2020.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas said, “First Nations customers living on reserve continue to make sacrifices that are considered unacceptable to most other Manitobans to procure sufficient energy. It is completely unacceptable that Manitoba Hydro raised rates for First Nations on-reserve residential customers by approximately 6.5% at the height of a global pandemic. The actions of Manitoba Hydro detrimentally impact First Nations peoples living on reserve at a time when everyone is suffering from the effects of COVID-19.”

“Manitoba Hydro is a monopolized Crown corporation that has been unlawfully operating on and destroying First Nations lands and waters for decades. While these operations have been detrimental to First Nations, they have benefitted most other Manitobans. The AMC’s application to the Supreme Court raised issues related to the systemic and unique barriers that First Nations people on-reserve face when heating and powering their homes and the attempts to reconcile the often detrimental historical and ongoing use of First Nations territory for public utility infrastructure and development.”

“The AMC calls on the Government of Canada and Government of Manitoba to work with First Nations to establish a First Nations Power Authority in this province, enabled and recognized under both provincial and federal legislation. The current *status quo* must not remain. It is unacceptable for our Nations, whose lands and waters are the source of hydro-electric power for Manitoba’s economy, to be subject to inequitable rates with no other choice: they either pay for power at unconscionable rates or are forced to go without.”

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About the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

The AMC was formed in 1988 by the Chiefs in Manitoba to advocate on issues that commonly affect First Nations in Manitoba. AMC is an authorized representative of 62 of the 63 First Nations in Manitoba with a total of more than 151,000 First Nation citizens in the province, accounting for approximately 12 percent of the provincial population. AMC represents a diversity of Anishinaabe (Ojibway), Nehetho / Inineu (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.