



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The AMC concerned about steadily increasing retail energy prices in Manitoba

Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs continues to express concern about the high energy costs for First Nations in Manitoba, both on and off-reserve, and calls for the Manitoba Government and Government of Canada to work with the AMC to implement a system of rebates to assist First Nations citizens struggling with energy poverty.

While most First Nations on-reserve citizens have no access to natural gas for heating, off-reserve citizens that rely on the market rate of natural gas will see an increase in their hydro bills on August 1. The Public Utilities Board approved an 8.7% increase for Centra Gas Manitoba Inc., or approximately \$58 more per year on average, for residential customers. Centra Gas sells natural gas to Manitoba customers through Manitoba Hydro.

This increase in natural gas rates, although market-driven, falls on the heels of significant increases in hydroelectric rates, which have not been subject to a full regulatory rate hearing for a number of years. The most recent rate change, increasing hydroelectric rates for residential customers by 2.9% was imposed by the Manitoba legislature without any regulatory oversight or review. More recently, the CEO of Manitoba Hydro stated that Manitoba Hydro requires a further 3.5% rate increase in 2021. These constant rate increases for natural gas and hydroelectricity have detrimentally impacted First Nations citizens in Manitoba, who are more likely to experience energy poverty than non-First Nations populations.

AMC Grand Chief Arlen Dumas said, “First Nations citizens continue to make sacrifices that are considered unacceptable to most other Manitobans to access sufficient energy for electricity and heating. It is completely unacceptable that First Nations, on and off-reserve, face increasing rates during a global pandemic that has disproportionately affected First Nations. This is particularly appalling given the unilateral actions of Manitoba Hydro to continually increase electricity rates without any regulatory oversight.”

“Manitoba Hydro is a monopolized Crown corporation that has been unlawfully operating on and destroying First Nations lands and waters for decades. First Nations across Canada have also suffered due to the unlawful operations of natural gas wells and pipelines on First Nations territories and Treaty lands, and the increasing harm to the environment stemming from reliance on fossil fuels. While energy operations have been detrimental to First Nations and their citizens, they have benefitted most other Manitobans and Canadians.”

“In addition to working to immediately implement a rebate system for First Nations citizens, the AMC continues to call on the Government of Canada and Government of Manitoba to work with First Nations to establish a First Nations Power Authority. Our Nations, whose lands and waters are the source of energy throughout Manitoba and Canada, should not continue to suffer excessively from energy poverty with little to no impartial regulatory oversight.”

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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 / Inineew (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) people.