



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2022

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Statement on New Hydro and Public Utilities Board Bill

Treaty One Territory, Manitoba – The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs issues this statement in response to the Province of Manitoba tabling Bill 36 – *The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act* on Tuesday, March 22, 2022.

Acting Grand Chief Eric Redhead states that “There has been no consultation with First Nations leadership on Bill 36. If enacted, starting in 2025, this Bill will unduly limit the authority of the Public Utilities Board (PUB) to provide adequate oversight over Manitoba Hydro’s rates and will restrict rate reviews to only once every three years. The AMC is concerned that Bill 36 will give the Province more influence over Manitoba Hydro’s operations. It is also concerned that despite the cap set out in the legislation, this will result in substantially higher electricity rates for First Nations customers well into the future.”

Continued electricity rate increases disproportionately impact low-income people and First Nations citizens on reserve. AMC is very aware of the impact of rate increases on First Nations people on-reserve. This is a very serious issue due to substandard housing on reserve and because First Nations on-reserve customers generally don’t have access to less expensive heating alternatives. The AMC has been involved in ongoing appearances at the PUB, advocating for a reduced First Nations electricity rate, which Manitoba Hydro has consistently refused.

Acting Grand Chief Redhead stated, “While the bill contemplates, in the future, allowing for the retail supply of power by persons other than Manitoba Hydro, some AMC member First Nations’ energy projects are already operating and doing that now. The lack of consultation does not promote reconciliation and is disrespectful, and the Province must do better. I call on Premier Stefanson to repair the deteriorating relationship between First Nations and Manitoba Hydro and allow for a more cooperative energy business model by changing the existing legislative regime to empower First Nations in Manitoba to generate and distribute clean, competitive, and reliable energy that puts our people, Nations and the environment first through the development of a First Nations Power Authority.”

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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.