

Nisichawayasihk CREE NATION

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Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation pleased with CEC dismissal of PCN motion to Clean Environment Commission

NELSON HOUSE, Manitoba – October 6, 2003 – Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation is pleased with a Manitoba Clean Environment Commission ruling to dismiss a two-part motion made by the Pimicikamak Cree Nation that, if approved, could have had serious consequences for Clean Environment Commission hearings into the Wuskwatim hydroelectric development proceeding as scheduled in February.

PCN's motion called for the Commission to expand the scope of the February hearings beyond examination of the Wuskwatim project itself to include a review of all hydroelectric development and related projects in northern Manitoba over the past 30 years. The second part of the motion called for the CEC to rule that the joint Manitoba Hydro NCN Environmental Impact Statement filed with the Commission is seriously deficient.

"The CEC's decision to dismiss the motion was clear and decisive," NCN Councillor and Future Development Portfolio Holder, W. Elvis Thomas said. "It will allow the full CEC hearings, which are prescribed as part of the project approval process, to proceed as scheduled in February. Had the motion carried, this could have caused considerable delay if substantially more information and studies were needed for the hearings to move ahead."

CEC recommendations must be reviewed by the provincial and federal governments as part of the final project-approval process.

Manitoba Hydro and NCN had originally hoped the full CEC hearings into Wuskwatim could proceed this fall to allow for project approval before year's end. This would have allowed the first phase of construction to begin in winter 2004 to provide for an in-service date for Wuskwatim as early as 2009.

The CEC determined more time was needed to prepare and set hearing dates to being in mid February. This could delay the in-service date for Wuskwatim by up to one year.

"This ruling is just one less hurdle NCN must overcome. NCN still needs to conclude a Project Development Agreement with Manitoba Hydro and have a ratification vote by our members before the project can proceed." Thomas said.

WHERE THREE RIVERS MEET

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