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YEARS • ANS



Friends of the Earth  
Les Ami(e)s de la Terre



## Government of Canada must deal with the Devil

### *Friends of the Earth Canada and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce petition Canadian Auditor General for answers on Devils Lake Outlet, before permit to pollute is re-issued*

(Ottawa / Winnipeg – June 12, 2008) The Devil's in the details - especially when it comes to enforcing an environmental safeguard agreement established three years ago over the controversial Devils Lake Outlet in North Dakota.

A year after an emergency debate was held in the House of Commons over the status of the Devil's Lake Outlet, Friends of the Earth Canada and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce have joined forces to petition the Auditor General of Canada to ensure that Canadian politicians and officials protect Canadian waters against the deleterious impacts associated with the Devils Lake Outlet.

The Petition calls for public disclosure by Canada's Ministers of the Environment and Foreign Affairs, including the actions taken by both the Canadian Ambassador to the United States and the Consul General, on matters agreed to by Canada and the United States according to the 2005 Multi-layered Safeguard Agreement.

"If Canada has not received assurances that the safeguard terms have been adopted and incorporated, then Canada must insist the outlet be closed down permanently," says Beatrice Olivastri, CEO of Friends of the Earth Canada. "Allowing this boondoggle to continue sets an unacceptable precedent for trans-boundary water issues."

Under the Agreement, Canada and the United States pledged to work together on the construction of an advanced filtration/disinfection system, an early detection and monitoring system for water quality / aquatic nuisance species and to take immediate measures to prevent the spread of any aquatic nuisance species that pose significant risk to the Basin. The Red River and Lake Winnipeg both downstream from the Devils Lake Outlet, are important natural, recreational and economic resources for the entire region and could be directly affected.

The Canadian petition arrives just prior to the re-issue of a permit to continue operating the Devils Lake outlet with only a rudimentary gravel filter in place. The permit will allow unaltered operation of the outlet until 2013.

"Economically and environmentally the stakes are huge," says Graham Starmer, President of the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce. "We need the political will to prevent the ill."

The AG Petition process was established by Parliament to ensure Canadians receive timely answers from federal ministers on specific environmental and sustainable development issues that involve federal jurisdiction. Friends of the Earth and the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce believe that Canadians have the right to such answers on the enforcement of the 2005 Environmental Safeguard Agreement on the Devils Lake Outlet.

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