

SPEAKING NOTES FOR JASON M COOK
AS PRESENTED BY JASON M COOK – RESEARCHER/CONSULTANT
THICKET PORTAGE TRAPPERS ASSOCIATION

PUB HEARINGS for the NFAT Review

Hello , my name is Jason M Cook, from Thicket Portage, and because this proceeding is a Needs For and Alternatives to (NFAT) review. The issue is to determine which Manitoba Hydro (MH) development plan is in the best interest of Northern Residents. And other issues identified by MH in its application, the PUB 's role is to (among other things) review and address the impact on domestic electricity rates as well as socio-economic impacts.

Brief History on the community of Thicket Portage

Thicket Portage is located between Wintering Lake and Landing Lake (Nelson River) and presently under the administration of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs with an elected Mayor and Council.

Thicket Portage has been in existence since the late 1880s and once was a trapping and fishing community.

Since the mid 1955, the community was a depot for Canadian Nickel company which later changed to INCO. The community residences didn't receive any compensations for lands that was used by traditional land users (trappers) and fishermen. The community was not fully acknowledged.

The development and operation of the previous hydro projects has numerous impacts, which includes:

- environments, ecosystems, fisheries, wildlife and plants.
- Water supplies
- Navigation

Thicket Portage residents pay hydro rates through social assistance since there is no employment in the community, no economic development,

Government and corporations have extracted our forests for their gain and our community has not benefited from the workforce that came into our traditional resource area. The commercial fishing is limited due the fluctuation of the water-level in the lakes. And the quota set by the government.

Where is the laws of equity and fairness,

We live under the government system established by Manitoba Government and I am not here to debate that the system process is right or wrong.

However, I am here to convey to you how existing hydro systems affected our traditional lands and our people.

With respect to the residents of Thicket Portage, they are members of Pimicikamak, Split Lake, OCN, and Metis Federation. Majority of the population are Pimicikamak as their parent First Nation.

The Nelson River system has erosion and our ancestors burial sites have been desecrated Not knowing where they are buried anymore.

We need to control the damage that has been done and continues as other hydro projects are being developed.

It is also my opinion that it is not necessary for the purposes of this proceedings to fully resolve rate mitigation issues, but it is important to acknowledge the potential that some groups of consumers will be worse off.

Therefore, I suggest that PUB in this proceeding should provide a direction to MH to specifically and explicitly address the future socio-economic rate impact of the final development plan

- our homeland and environment has been destroyed
- our traditional economies have been destroyed
- navigable waterways are no longer safe for travel
- our animals and fish are no longer healthy
- our ancestors have not been respected

We have a responsibility to make sound and conscience decisions

Historically our people have been very good providers, Good responsible men who cared after the welfare of their families.

History shows that projects have and will continue to adversely affect the community of Thicket Portage.

Sharing the wealth of natural resources development should be done in a transparent, accountable, visible fair and equitable ways and means.

We are surrounded by hydro dams ,yet we the northern residents continue the pay higher rates on power, than the southern customers.

The numerous initiatives that have been taken at the federal and provincial/territorial levels to address the problems faced by indigenous peoples have been insufficient. Aboriginal peoples concerns and well-being merit higher priority at all levels and within all branches of Governments, and across all departments. Concerted measures, based on mutual understanding and real partnership with aboriginal peoples, through their representative institutions, are vital to establishing long-term solutions. To that end, it is necessary for Canada to arrive at a common on understanding with aboriginal peoples of objectives and goals that are based on full respect for their constitutional, treaty, and its internationally-recognized rights.

In conclusion on my presentation to the panel, I want to thank you for giving me the time and opportunity to share my views and opinions