



## The PUB Post – Spring Newsletter, March 2026

2026 has barely begun and already there are several items underway on the PUB's calendar:

- Between January 1 - 28, 2026, six [Notices](#) were published regarding water and wastewater applications filed with the PUB, the outcomes of which are expected later this year. More information on water and wastewater regulation can be found in this newsletter, and on our [website](#).
- The PUB Annual Report – our [annual publication](#) detailing our activities throughout the year, which we post on our website.
- Manitoba Public Insurance is expected to file its 2027 General Rate Application in June, which would result in a regulatory hearing being held in the fall.

These are the knowns. In addition, each year the PUB faces the unknowns, those applications, requests or directions from government that are not expected but appear and require our (often immediate) attention.

These processes require considerable effort of the applicant utilities/Crowns, participating interveners as well as PUB members, staff, and advisers. The PUB follows the same [hearing processes](#) and makes decisions based on the evidence presented at the hearings.

We anticipate the year ahead will be challenging as we continue to balance the interests of ratepayers with the financial health of the utilities.



## **Manitoba Hydro Update**

### **Fiscal 2026 to 2028 General Rate Application Final Rate Order**

On December 30, 2025, the PUB approved a 4% interim increase to stabilize Manitoba Hydro's finances during drought conditions, effective January 1, 2026. The increase applied to all customer classes and all rate components, except for rates in Manitoba Hydro's Diesel Zone (four remote communities that are not connected to the electrical grid and receive electricity from diesel-fired generators).

Manitoba Hydro (Hydro) filed a three-year general rate application in March 2025, which requested three consecutive years of 3.5% increases. The interim rate increase approved in the PUB's interim order was higher than what the utility requested for the 2025/26 fiscal year, but the PUB is of the view the increase was necessary, on an urgent basis, to protect the financial health of Hydro in light of the current drought.

In our winter newsletter we provided an overview of the [Interim Rate Decision](#), noting that the decision did not address many of the other issues raised at the public hearing.

The final rate order is expected later this month, and it will be posted on the PUB website. Our summer newsletter will feature an overview of the order and how it affects Manitobans.

---

## **Energy Integrated Resource Plan Update**



In the [Winter Newsletter](#) we spoke about what an energy integrated resource plan (IRP) is and its value to Manitobans. It is important to note that while it is a strategic planning document used to forecast and plan for future energy needs in a reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable way, it is also an ongoing process driven by an ever-changing energy landscape. As Manitoba's energy needs evolve over time, the IRP must adapt to that change.

On January 28, 2026, the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro issued an Order in Council (OIC) referring the integrated resource plan prepared by Manitoba Hydro (Hydro) to the PUB for review and recommendations. The OIC contained Terms of Reference, which set out the parameters of the review and the process by which the review was to follow, and confirmed the PUB recommendations were to be submitted to the Minister on or before December 3, 2026.

On February 2, 2026, Hydro filed its [integrated resource plan](#) (IRP) with the PUB. It sets out Manitoba Hydro's strategy and roadmap for energy with a proposed development plan for its electricity system and the natural gas system that is operated by its subsidiary, Centra Gas Manitoba.

Part one of the IRP describes how Hydro plans to both save and generate more electricity over the next 10 years making approximately 1,760 more megawatts of electricity available to consumers through a combination of

energy-saving measures and new infrastructure. Here's what that looks like, according to the IRP:

- To fully build out the new wind farms to increase its generating capacity is estimated to take nine years.
- It is estimated to take until 2029 to improve existing hydroelectric plants
- Three gas-burning turbines in Brandon estimated to be fully built by 2030.
- A five-megawatt battery storage pilot project estimated to be finished by 2034.
- New wind farms to be completed by Indigenous-led private companies by 2035.

The IRP also calls for 860 megawatts in energy-saving measures intended to reduce the peak demand for electricity during the worst of Manitoba's cold snaps or heat waves.

Part two of the IRP proposes, as part of the development plan, the construction of a major new facility (MNF) consisting of three new gas-burning turbines to be built at the Brandon Generating Station location. This proposal is considered a capital project, and, under the Manitoba Hydro Act, it must be referred by the government by way of a further Order in Council to the PUB for its review and recommendation. The PUB will review the materials related to the proposal once it receives the OIC instructing it to do so. Under the January 28, 2026, OIC the review of the MNF will be done jointly with the IRP once the second Order in Council is issued to the PUB. The IRP process is under way, and a five-week hearing is scheduled for the summer of 2026. The hearing will be live-streamed.

[Follow the progress of the IRP](#)

---



## **A Water & Wastewater Regulation Q&A Overview**

### **What role does the PUB play in regulating water and wastewater utilities?**

The Public Utilities Board (PUB) regulates the rates charged by most water and wastewater utilities in Manitoba. These utilities are primarily municipally, privately, or cooperatively owned. One exception is the City of Winnipeg, whose utility is excluded from PUB oversight under *The City of Winnipeg Charter*.

### **How significant is the water and wastewater portfolio for the PUB?**

It is one of the PUB's largest regulatory files. About one-third of PUB staff work on this portfolio, which includes oversight of approximately 240 utilities. In 2025 alone, the PUB issued [66 Board Orders](#) related to water and wastewater matters.

### **Who is responsible for operating these utilities?**

Although municipalities own and operate most PUB-regulated utilities, each utility functions as a distinct entity within the municipality. Ratepayers fund day-to-day operations, while municipal councils make decisions about how the utility is run.

## **Does the PUB regulate how utilities operate day to day?**

No. The PUB does not oversee daily operations, effluent quality, or drinking water safety. Its mandate focuses on rates and financial stability to ensure utilities can provide services cost-effectively.

## **Why are regular rate reviews important?**

Regular reviews help assess a utility's financial health. They ensure rates remain adequate, support long-term sustainability, and help identify small issues before they become major problems.

## **Why do utilities need to maintain strong financial footing?**

Water and wastewater infrastructure is expensive to replace or expand. A stable financial position allows utilities to plan for and manage aging or inadequate infrastructure.

## **What costs should be included in water and wastewater rates?**

Rates should cover all costs required to operate the utility, including:

- **Staffing costs:** recruitment, training, and salaries for water and wastewater system operators and administrative staff.
- **Treated water and wastewater costs:** including treatment, monitoring, and related operational expenses.
- **Depreciation/amortization:** a non-cash expense that allocates the cost of capital assets over their useful life, ensuring current ratepayers pay for the assets they use and helping build reserves for future replacements.
- **Debenture repayments:** municipalities often borrow funds to cover capital projects not covered by federal or provincial grants. These loans are repaid by property taxpayers, utility ratepayers, or both.

## **What is PS 3280, and how does it affect utilities?**

PS 3280 is a new accounting standard for asset retirement obligations, effective for municipal audited financial statements beginning with the 2023 audit. The PUB has updated its [Working Capital Surplus/Deficit calculation](#) to include these obligations. As of January 14, 2025, municipalities must use this revised calculation for regulatory purposes.

## **How does the PUB support municipalities in preparing rate applications?**

The PUB provides:

- Detailed directions through Board Orders
- [Educational webinars](#)
- Guideline documents explaining regulatory expectations and processes

These resources help municipalities understand [requirements](#) and prepare complete, accurate rate applications.

## **What resources are available for water and wastewater customers?**

The PUB offers online tools and information for customers, including:

- How to appeal a disconnection
- How to contact the PUB
- A fillable form for Manitobans to share their views

## **Where can I learn more about water and wastewater rate regulation?**

Additional information is available on the PUB website, including the [PUB Spotlight on Water and Wastewater Utility Regulation](#).

## Continuing Education



The PUB employs an innovation and continuous improvement philosophy to enhance its decision-making and its responsiveness to stakeholders.

This spring, members of the PUB will attend [CAMPUT 2026](#), the annual conference for Canada’s energy and utility regulators.

The 2026 conference will be guided by the theme “*Bridging the Divide: Bold Strategies for a Resilient Energy Future*”, exploring how regulators and stakeholders can unite across regional, technical, and institutional divides to strengthen Canada’s energy future.

Manitoba continues to take a leading role assisting in the development of educational content for the conferences. This year’s session will explore how utilities, stakeholders and regulators can bridge the information gap, so consultation is meaningful and fair.

More information on the PUB’s commitment to its ongoing education will be available in future PUB newsletters.