Closing Comments by Chair Robert Gabor, KC
Public Utilities Board Joint Review of Manitoba Hydro's 2025 Integrated Resource Plan and proposed Major New Facilities
End of Oral Hearing – September 4, 2026

1. Manitoba Hydro has advised that any REPLY submissions, to new topics raised by Interveners, will be provided in writing next Wednesday. As such, this brings us to the end of the oral hearing portion of the Public Utilities Board's joint public review of Manitoba Hydro's 2025 Integrated Resource Plan and proposed Major New Facilities.

2. This process began when Manitoba Hydro's 2025 Integrated Resource Plan was referred to the Public Utilities Board by Order in Council on February 2, 2026.

3. Manitoba Hydro's Major New Facilities proposal for the installation of combustion turbines at the Brandon Generating Station was then referred to the Board by a separate Order in Council on April 29, 2026.

4. Through both Orders in Council the Public Utilities Board received a mandate to conduct a joint review of the 2025 Integrated Resource Plan and proposed Major New Facilities and to provide recommendations to the government.

5. Based on the Manitoba Hydro Act, the Integrated Resource Plan must be approved by the Government of Manitoba. The responsible Minister may request changes before the IRP is approved, and the Board's recommendations will inform those decisions.

6. Manitoba Hydro also requires government approval to proceed with its proposed combustion turbines. This decision will also be informed by the Board's recommendations which will be included in our separate report.

7. In the course of this proceeding, the Board has received evidence and submissions from Manitoba Hydro, submissions from seven intervener groups, evidence from 11 expert witnesses, and presentations from many interested organizations and members of the public. All of the evidence, including transcripts of testimony and exhibits, as well as submissions and presentations on the public record may be found on the PUB website.

8. This has been the Board's first review of a Manitoba Hydro Integrated Resource Plan, and the Board's first Major New Facilities review under the new section 16 of *The Manitoba Hydro Act*. In addition, this process has been subjected to ambitious timelines through both the discovery process and the past six weeks of oral hearing. The Board appreciates the cooperation of all

parties and their counsel in supporting the efficient conduct of this proceeding.

9. A particular thank you goes out to the Board staff who made it possible for this hearing to proceed so smoothly. I want to highlight a few staff members: Board Secretary and Executive Director Rachel McMillin assumed those roles less than a year ago. In that time she had to deal with a series of major applications from Manitoba Hydro, draft her first budget and address all office administration issues. She did so cooly and calmly, which was especially impressive when you realize there were more than a dozen different schedules for this hearing. Her constant refrain: “Don’t worry, it will get done.” And it always did. Thank you Rachel.

10. The Board’s Senior Judicial Hearing Officer, Catherine Paige is always the first person in the office on hearing days. She ensures the technology works and stays until the end of the day, getting everything ready for the next day. There are many presentations (often different versions) and exhibits and she magically had them appear on our screens at precisely the right time, every time. Thank you Catherine.

11. Ricardo Rattan is the Board's Innovation Officer. He is responsible for the PUB's technology and oversees the systems in this room, which has worked flawlessly during the hearing. Thank you Ricardo.

12. Denise Carriere Is our Executive Coordinator and she is responsible for meeting the administrative needs of the Panel. A big thank you to her.

13. The Board has benefitted from the expertise and dedicated commitment of its hearing advisors –Brady Ryall and David Bonin of Ryall Engineering, and Board Counsel Bob Peters, Avril Brown, David Thiessen and Chris Klassen of Fillmore Riley. More about them later.

14. To date the actual hearing has lasted six weeks. But the Board's work on this matter is not done. After we adjourn today the panel will meet to discuss the work schedule. An issues matrix will be prepared that sets out all the issues, the positions of the parties on every issue in great detail, including reference to exhibits and transcript page numbers. Panel deliberations will be methodical and will start **after** the hearing concludes next Wednesday with the filing of Manitoba Hydro's Reply.

15. The Board is committed to rigorous and transparent proceedings. All evidence before the Board at this hearing, including transcripts, can be found on the Board's website.

16. The Board's reports and recommendations will be made on the basis of all evidence and submissions before it. Any information in articles, opinion pieces or comments in the media or on the Internet is not evidence and will not be considered by the Panel.

17. The Board will issue its two separate reports in the coming months.

PERSONAL COMMENTS

18. I want to conclude with a few personal comments.

19. This is my last hearing as Chair of the Public Utilities Board. Earlier today I sent the Minister Responsible for the Public Utilities Board, The Honourable Adrien Sala, my letter of retirement. In it I wrote the following:

"I have served as Chair of the Public Utilities Board of Manitoba for the past 10 years. It is with mixed emotions that I advise I will be retiring at the end of this year. I will be turning 73, and I am looking forward to spending more time with our four grandchildren, travelling with my wife while we are both healthy, and devoting time to a few projects that I believe may contribute to a better Manitoba.

20. I left the practice of law in 2016 after 36 years because I wanted a new challenge. The experience falls under the adage “be careful what you wish for”. The past decade has been interesting, exciting and challenging - often all at once. I have been extraordinarily fortunate to work with incredibly talented Board members, expert advisors and dedicated staff who share a deep commitment to serving the public interest of Manitobans.

21. Today is my day to give thanks.

22. First, to an incredible Team.

23. The members of this Panel and this Board. Each member is so smart, so hard-working and such fine people. We work so well together, tease each other relentlessly but always focus on what needs to be done.

24. To the PUB staff, to my knowledge we have the smallest staff for a full-service utility regulator in North America. We are but 10, with three staffers working with 240 water and wastewater utilities. As our communications advisor, Angie Wilde, wrote in a recent newsletter “we may be small, but we are mighty.” You should all subscribe to our newsletter. Our current annual report, which is on our website, compares the numbers across Canada. You

should all read our annual report. Our staff performs at a remarkably high-level week in and week out.

25. We are so fortunate to have such fine advisors who provide us briefings and advice on the most technical details, tables, graphs, charts, reports, analyzing and listing all the issues and positions of the parties in meticulous detail. They put in such incredibly long hours but always deliver high-quality products.

26. I want to take a moment to talk about the lawyers who have appeared in this room. As someone who was called to the Bar some 46 years ago and worked with hundreds of lawyers, I can say the advocacy in this room, for the most part, has been exceptional. I especially want to acknowledge the senior lawyers, who are mentors, passing on their knowledge and experience to the younger lawyers. In Judaism, there is a Hebrew phrase "L'dor v'dor" which means "from generation to generation". It is gratifying to see the tradition of legal excellence transfer from this generation to the next.

27. Last week a friend of mine in the private sector asked what business we are in. I said "the public trust". We must earn the public's trust by being fair and impartial, consider all the evidence and dedicate ourselves to making

important and difficult decisions using our knowledge, experience and best judgement.

28. He then asked how the process worked. I told him that you start with start with the utility. Its dedicated staff spends hundreds of hours to generate applications of thousands of pages that come before us for consideration.

29. Then you add in interveners who represent various interests, led by leading lawyers and supported by experts, who challenge different parts of the application and offer their perspectives. The interveners bring forward their witnesses and witness panels. In this hearing we saw a great amount of collaboration between the parties which was greatly appreciated.

30. With such a limited staff we rely on the participation of Interveners and their experts, as well as our advisors and the independent experts the Board may appoint, to assist the Board.

31. We also receive many presentations from individuals and groups. Their efforts make our process better.

32. We will take all the information from all the parties, analyze it methodically and arrive at our recommendations to meet our mandates as set out in the Orders in Council.

33. I suspect that few of the public understand the complexity of the process or the monumental effort that is required. The process is exhaustive and exhausting. So, on behalf of Manitoba, I want to thank the parties and participants to this proceeding: to the employees of Manitoba Hydro, and specifically to Allan Danroth, Dave Bowen, Allistair Fogg, Lindsay Melvin, the people who testified on panels 1, 2 and 3 in the hearing room and those who supported them in the back row, the third floor and back at the head office. Thank you. I would say to Manitoba Hydro, this is only the beginning, the next time will be easier.

34. The people of Manitoba also thank the talented people who work for Efficiency Manitoba who lead the effort to reduce energy consumption.

35. Finally, to the interveners. Thank you to Manitoba Eco-Network and Environmental Defence, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakinak, Consumers Coalition, Sustainable Brandon, Manitoba Industrial Power Users Group, Wa Ni Ska Tan and General Service Small and General Service Medium customer class users, their lawyers, representatives and experts.

36. It has been an honour to have worked with all of you. I trust you will give my successor the same dedication and support as you have given me.

37. And, for the final time, I say “we stand adjourned”. Have a good long weekend. You deserve it. Thank you.