



**Keepers of the
Athabasca**

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Open Response to:
Alberta Environment and Parks
Attn: Muhammad Aziz, P. Eng., Designated Director
Operations Division
Suite #1, 250 Diamond Avenue
PO Box 4240
Spruce Grove, Alberta T7X 3B4

June 23, 2015

Dear Muhammad Aziz, and Alberta Environment and Parks

RE: Application No. 012-1744, Submission for Swan Hills Treatment Centre, EPEA 12 - 1744

In response to your request on June 24, 2015 to demonstrate that the Keepers of the Athabasca is directly affected by operations at the Swan Hills (hazardous waste) Treatment Centre, we submit the following information. Guided by both Indigenous Elders' Traditional Knowledge and western science, the Keepers of the Athabasca (2006) are First Nations, Métis, Inuit, environmental groups, and watershed citizens working together for the protection of water, land, air, and all living things today and tomorrow in the Athabasca River watershed.

Our membership includes both individuals and groups. In reference to the groups involved with Keepers of the Athabasca, we have participation from environment groups, First Nations, and Metis Settlements. Many of our membership groups feel they are directly affected, and in this correspondence, we list both individuals, and one local environment group who have asked to be included so far.

One significant manner in which groups and individuals have told us they are affected is the 15 kilometre zone around the plant that calls for no hunting or gathering. This zone affects hundreds of people each year, including those who cannot access 'the zone' due to contamination fears, and also those who may hunt and gather each year in other areas. For evidence of how this 'zone' affects Traditional hunters, gatherers, and consumers of country food (or non-consumers, as the report will explain), we submit the report, "Hazardous Waste: Disrupted Lives" by Ginger Gibson, Environmental Health Sciences Program, University of Alberta, and Rutgers University Centre for Environmental Communication (2001).

Many individuals are concerned about increased incidences of rare cancers and childhood cancers. These concerns were brought forward by our member group, the Society of High Prairie Regional Environmental Action Committee (REAC). REAC's mission involves both public education about and activities supporting responsible waste management, sustainable

energy production, sustainable resource development, airshed and watershed protection in the Lesser Slave Lake region. In 2008, Alberta Health Surveillance teamed up with the Public Health Agency of Canada to provide REAC with a researcher who spent two years investigating these concerns. Her conclusion, that the population covered in this study was not large enough to be ‘statistically significant,’ was found deeply insulting and disturbing. Concerned citizens felt it inappropriate that a researcher could not find the trend that locals have no trouble in noticing: every single family living in the Swan River valley has members suffering or dead from cancers. Reassurances from Alberta Health that one out of every two Albertans will get cancer in their lifetime have not been very effective.

The following quote, made this week, represents one of the individuals named in this correspondence, and describes on behalf of all of us some of the circumstances and fears that are all too common between High Prairie, Sucker Creek First Nation, Jousard, Driftpile Cree Nation, Faust, Kinuso, Swan River First Nation, Assineau, Widewater, Canyon Creek, Sawridge First Nation, Slave Lake, and Smith, Alberta.

“It causes me stress, because we don't know how this company has changed our ecosystem, and the quality of our water Perhaps we are the test subjects, but I don't want for myself and those I care about to be guinea pigs. I'm scared. I could add that my father, mother, and sister were diagnosed with cancer within 5yrs.”

We also submit with our response, the “State of the Watershed” 2015 report for Lesser Slave Lake, as, in the paleolimnology section of this report, documented evidence of PCB contamination of the lake sediment core samples is detailed. Of grave concern from this report is the fact that PCB's are actually filtering through the lake sediment layers into layers representing previous decades in which PCB's did not yet exist. We note that as the sediment core samples analyzed in this report were from 2009, they will not include PCB fall-out from the largest yet explosion and fire to the FDB incinerator that occurred that year. As PCB contamination is documented in the Lesser Slave Lake, tens of thousands of people living nearby should be considered to be directly affected.

Individuals who wish to be named as ‘directly affected’ are:

Chief Ryan Davis	Swan River First Nation
Elsie Stenstrom-Dumont	Swan River First Nation, Slave Lake
Eleanor Sawan	Swan River First Nation, Slave Lake
Gerald Giroux	Swan River First Nation
Dwayne Davis	Swan River First Nation
Doris Courtoreille	Swan River First Nation
Dean Dorkinson	Kinuso
Chief Jim Badger	Sucker Creek First Nation
Doug Badger	Sucker Creek First Nation
Chief Dean Giroux	Driftpile Cree Nation
Alice W. Giroux	Driftpile Cree Nation
Collin Giroux	Driftpile Cree Nation
Tawny Giroux	Driftpile Cree Nation
Ross Giroux Sr.	Driftpile Cree Nation
Glen Giroux Sr.	Driftpile Cree Nation

Darryll Giroux	Driftpile Cree Nation
April Giroux	Driftpile Cree Nation
Wanda F. Chalifoux	Driftpile Cree Nation
Adelbert Chalifoux	Driftpile Cree Nation
Danielle Thunder	Driftpile Cree Nation
Patsy Campiou	Faust
Bonnie Raho	Faust
Chief Roland Twinn	Sawridge First Nation
Winona Twinn, Consultation Liaison	Sawridge First Nation
Melanie Cline-Thera	Slave Lake
Barb Courtorielle	Slave Lake
Ceno David Loyie	Slave Lake
Donna Courtourielle	Slave Lake
Ernest Supernant	Slave Lake, Sucker Creek First Nation
Jule Asterisk	Slave Lake
Allan Atkinson	Slave Lake
Corrine Attilon	Slave Lake
Becky Attilon	Slave Lake
Cindy Olsen	Widewater

In addition to these individuals, we enclose the following historical documents:

- ABORIGINAL SOCIETY AND ALBERTA'S NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION BOARD a discussion paper prepared by the Regional Elders Environment Commission for the Natural Resources conservation Board (august 1992)
- REGIONAL ELDERS ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION, Elder Interviews (1992)
- PRESENTATION OF GRAND CHIEF JIM BADGER (May 7, 1996) to the Environmental Appeal Board

We have been assured that the individuals and First Nations named in these documents who are still alive, and also many of their descendents, continue to have their original concerns about SHTC, if not even more compounded concerns, as the SHTC continues to operate, spreading 'allowable emissions' and also continues have incidents of larger 'un-planned releases'.

We trust that this correspondence answers your request to explain how Keepers of the Athabasca feels that both ourselves as a group, and our group and individual members feel that we are directly affected by the Approval of **Application No. 012-1744**. Please also know that those named here are acting for countless others who, although they heartily agree with the concerns presented, will not put their name to a document. We will continue collecting names, both of groups and individuals of those who consider themselves to be directly affected by the operation of the Swan Hills (hazardous waste) Treatment Centre.

Thank you for your time on this file,

Doug Badger, Co-chair

Bruce Jackson, Co-chair