

Thursday, June 22, 2006

Mr. Joe Murdoch,

In response to Dillon Consulting's Intervener response, dated June 2, 2006.

The wetlands surrounding P-Lake, and the lake itself, have historically experienced flooding during spring break-up and snowmelt. These seasonal floodwaters are currently pristine and unpolluted. Based on the designs and comments submitted to date by Dillon Consulting, this spring flooding may affect the lagoon such that the wetlands will be used to handle any such excess drainage during the spring thaw. This will introduce polluted water into the grasslands and very likely into P-Lake and quite possibly directly into the bay. This new waste water source will most likely be absent of oxygen and over time will eventually replace the existing ground water which currently is rich in oxygen with polluted untreated effluent.

Aside from turning these wetlands into another sewage infested area, of which we already have two on a very small island, these polluted deposits contain microorganisms one of which is thought to be Avian Botulism, which as we know is a major contributor to water fowl deaths. As waterfowl is a major food group in Nunavut and the North we need to be more conscious of how we treat our lands as we move into the 22 century.

Perhaps lagoons were the preferred method of handling waste water back in the 50's and 60's however with today's technological advancements in water treatment facilities even the smallest of communities can have a scaled treatment plant that is cost effective and produces bacteria free effluent that can be safely introduced back into our waterways. With the numerous advances in mechanical treatment plants over the last 10 years, innovation and new technologies have provided us with the means of installing self-contained low-maintenance waste treatment facilities.

Some of these new technologies also have the added functionality of producing reusable by products such as sludge that can be converted to syngas which would be highly beneficial in helping meet some of our energy needs. The ability to produce clean water that can be used to meet some of our secondary water requirements such as washing cars, flooding rinks, generator-cooling systems, and heating requirements would also be a beneficial byproduct. At the very least with clean bacteria free water we can safely dump the effluent into our water systems and bays.

As both energy and water are a large expense to all northern communities, a mechanical plant today can be not only completely self-sustaining but has the potential to help save costs in other high budget areas. Other significant benefits exist when considering a mechanical plant that will generate sludge byproduct is the addition of a gasification unit to convert the sludge into energy (syngas, oil) and the ability of the gasification system to turn municipal solid waste into syngas. This would address another large cost to a Hamlet (and Nunavut) with the added benefit of also having a process of dealing with other issues such as environmental cleanup of animal waste, disposal of medical waste, and proper disposal of restaurant fats and oils that all currently are disposed of in already inadequate lagoons and dump sites.

In my opinion, saying a thing does not make it so. Dillon Consulting claims that the proposed sewage lagoon is more cost effective than a mechanical plant yet has not actually provided any operating costs, cost comparisons, or projections. To my knowledge, no comparisons or research reports have been provided to the Hamlet such that they could make an informed decision on the best system and direction we should take.

With that said, I still have issues with the type of system selected and feel that we should be provided with a comparison report detailing the specific pros and cons / costs and risks of a lagoon versus a mechanical plant with current technologies.

Although I have opinions on the inadequacies of the structural aspects of the design submitted, I am not an engineer and will leave that to the experts.

Concerning the environment and wildlife, I still believe the lagoon will affect the local wildlife and waterfowl not only during construction but also for years to follow.

I am also now even more concerned with the possibility of the lagoon mixing with our drinking water system. Dillon's comment 'the risk of sewage contamination with the water source is very low' must be there is NO risk. Even a low risk should be raising some flags somewhere; it certainly has with me.

I remain concerned,

Claude Constantineau
Cape Dorset