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November 17, 2017

Sherry Lou Forsyth
Last Mountain Lake Stewardship Group

Sent via email: sherry.forsyth@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Forsyth,

The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) is aware of the 'Common Ground Drainage Channel Diversion Project' (the Project) proposed by the Quill Lakes Watershed Association (the proponent) located southwest of Quill Lakes and approximately 30 kilometres north of Last Mountain Lake.

The Project includes the construction of a 25 km drainage diversion channel starting at Pel Lake Ducks Unlimited Dam, heading south towards Kutawagan Lake, Peter Lake and Last Mountain Lake in the Qu'Appelle River Watershed. Eight culverts would be replaced and two flow control structures consisting of gated 900 mm culverts would be installed at 9 km and 23 km. The Project would divert up to 7,000,000 m³ of water annually potentially lowering the Quill Lakes by 0.6 m.

The Agency has determined that the Project as proposed does not meet the definition of a designated project under the *Regulations Designating Physical Activities*¹ (the Regulations) pursuant to the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012).

In cases where a proposed project is not identified in the Regulations or is below the prescribed threshold, but by virtue of its characteristics or location may have the potential to cause adverse environmental effects in areas of federal jurisdiction, the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (the Minister) may designate a project for the purpose of requiring an environmental assessment under Subsection 14(2) of CEAA 2012. Additional information regarding the process for designation requests received by the Agency can be found at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environmental-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance/designating-project-under-canadian-environmental-assessment-act-2012.html>.

¹ *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, Regulations Designating Physical Activities* s (1)b: The construction, operation, decommissioning and abandonment, in a wildlife area or migratory bird sanctuary, of a new structure for the diversion of water, including a dam, dyke or reservoir; or (6) The construction, operation, decommissioning and abandonment of a new structure for the diversion of 10 000 000 m³/year or more of water from a natural water body into another natural water body.

Environment and Climate Change Canada have expressed concerns regarding the potential environmental effects on the Last Mountain Lake National Wildlife Area and Migratory Bird Sanctuary, as well as the potential for highly saline water (a deleterious substance) to enter fish bearing water. As a result, the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) has initiated a review of the Projects' potential environmental effects.

The Agency will consider input from Last Mountain Lake Stewardship Group and other entities in its preparation of advice to the Minister on whether to designate the Project under CEAA 2012. The Agency requests Last Mountain Lake Stewardship Group views and comments, in writing, by December 4, 2017, on whether the Project should be designated under CEAA 2012 and on the potential environmental, including cumulative, effects to fish and fish habitat, migratory birds, species at risk, federal lands, and Indigenous peoples.

The Agency will review the Project and the potential environmental effects, and reflect the information you provide in its recommendation to the Minister on whether the Project should be designated.

Attached is the information provided by the Quill Lakes Watershed Association to support your consideration of this request.

Saskatchewan Environment determined on September 8, 2017 that a provincial environmental assessment is not required as the Project is not considered a 'development' under Saskatchewan's *Environmental Assessment Act*.

Should you have any questions or concerns please contact Anna Kessler at (780) 495-2479 or by e-mail at anna.kessler@ceaa-acee.gc.ca.

Sincerely,



Anna Kessler
Project Manager
Prairie and Northern Region