

Re: The not-so-unexpected return of Sio Silica, Winnipeg Free Press July 29, 2024 editorial

The Sio Silica Vivian project was rejected by the current Manitoba Government for environmental concerns over potential contamination of the Manitoba southeastern aquifer, Sio Silica's unproven processes, and contamination of above ground waterways with contaminated process wastewater slurry.

On August 24, 2020, former Chief Deborah Smith of the Brokenhead Ojibway Nation wrote a letter to the Canadian Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, and the Director, Prairie and Northern Region, Impact Assessment Agency of Canada concerning "adverse affects", reflecting similar concerns to those expressed by the Manitoba Government. I am not sure of the position of the current Chief Gordon BlueSky, but I expect he is aware of the risks and severe consequences involved with potential environmental, aquifer and potable water contamination.

I understand Sio Silica is once again pitching its silica sand extraction project, this time directly to Brokenhead Ojibway Nation.

Sio Silica has not, to my knowledge, made any change to their methodology, risk mitigation or risk/consequence assessment, and any damage or contamination to the aquifer and the Brokenhead River system will have far reaching consequences, to residences, businesses, municipalities and other government and farming entities within southeastern Manitoba served by these aquifers, as well as erosion of real estate value and recreational revenue.

If the aquifer does become unusable because of contamination from the Sio Silica mining processes, the costs to provide alternate potable water are significant. Existing wells will have to be sealed and capped, potable water cisterns and plumbing systems installed at an estimated \$10,000 per well. Potable water will need to be trucked in at an estimated cost of \$100 per month. I find it difficult to obtain an accurate number of wells in southeast Manitoba that would be affected, but **assuming 100,000 wells the capital cost is estimated to be over \$1Billion, plus ongoing costs of water delivery and system maintenance.** I would welcome a more accurate assessment if someone could better quantify the financial risks, including the impact of a deficiency of qualified contractors, equipment, and inspectors.

The federal, provincial and municipal governments need a full assessment and quantitative analysis of the risks and consequences of the Sio Silica project in the interests of all Manitobans.

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