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March 14, 2007

Ms Signe Snortland
Dakotas Area Office
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Post Office Box 1017
Bismarck, North Dakota
58502-1017
U.S.A.

Dear Ms Snortland:

I am writing to you to request an extension to the comment period for the supplemental draft environmental impact statement (SDEIS) for the Red River Valley water supply project. Comments are currently due March 26, 2007, a 45-day comment period. The SDEIS provides a large amount of new information not contained in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). As you know, the Government of Canada has provided substantive comments on the earlier Needs and Options Report and the DEIS, and wishes to provide similarly substantive comments to the SDEIS. However, the 45-day comment period will not allow sufficient time to develop considered suggestions.

The new material assembled by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for the SDEIS requires a significant amount of analysis across a variety of disciplines in order for the Government of Canada to comment meaningfully on the new document. Importantly, in the SDEIS the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has identified a higher risk option to Canada than in-basin supply alternatives, involving the diversion of Missouri River water into the Hudson Bay drainage basin, as its preferred alternative. The selection of an inter-basin diversion underlines the need for sufficient time for downstream jurisdictions, such as Canada, to consider the full implications of SDEIS.

In order to provide meaningful comments in light of the developments outlined above, I would request a 60-day extension to the current deadline of March 26, 2007.

Should you have any questions, or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Tobias Nussbaum
Director
U. S. Relations Division