

**ATTACHMENT:** July 21, 2021

**Provincial Advice Record: Designation Request under IAA**

**Response requested by July 20, 2021**

Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion Projects

Department/Agency	Indigenous Services Canada
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1. Has your department or agency considered whether it has an interest in the Project; exercised a power or performed a duty or function under any Act of Parliament in relation to the Project; or taken any course of action (including provision of financial assistance) that would allow the Project to proceed in whole or in part?

ISC is not responsible for approving or issuing licences, permits or authorizations for the assessments of large proposed projects.

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2. Is it probable that your department or agency may be required to exercise a power or perform a duty or function related to the Project to enable it to proceed?

If yes, specify that power, duty or function and its legislative source.

ISC will not be required to exercise a power or perform a duty or function related to the Project to enable it to proceed

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3. If your department or agency will exercise a power or perform a duty or function under any Act of Parliament in relation to the Project, will it involve public and Indigenous consultation?

Specify as appropriate.

ISC will not exercise a power or perform a duty or function under any Act of Parliament in relation to the Project.

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4. Is your department or agency in possession of specialist or expert information or knowledge that may be relevant to any potential adverse effects within federal jurisdiction caused by the Project or adverse direct or incidental effects stemming from the Project?

Specify as appropriate.

ISC has specialized knowledge pertaining First Nations peoples. Areas of expertise include but are not limited to: the provision of health services, community health and wellness programs, and drinking water on First Nations reserves and other social determinants of health.

Indigenous Services Canada also has information on and knowledge of Indigenous matters on Federal lands. Indigenous Services Canada has a mandate to support Indigenous people (First Nations, Inuit and Métis) in their efforts to improve social well-being and economic prosperity; to develop healthier, more sustainable communities; and to participate more fully in Canada's political, social and economic development

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5. Has your department or agency had previous contact or involvement with the proponent or other parties in relation to the Project?

Provide an overview of the information or advice exchanged.

No, ISC did not have previous contact or involvement with the proponent or other parties in relation to the Project

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6. From the perspective of the mandate and area(s) of expertise of your department or agency, does the Project have the potential to cause adverse effects within federal jurisdiction or adverse direct or incidental effects as described in section 2 of IAA? Could any of those effects be managed through legislative or regulatory mechanisms administered by your department or agency? If a licence, permit, authorization or approval may be issued, could it include conditions in relation to those effects?

Specify as appropriate.

The projects encompass proposed construction and operation of irrigation projects surrounding Lake Diefenbaker, Saskatchewan. It would be completed in three separate phases and would dig about 500 km of canals, build four balancing reservoirs and an outfall structure into Buffalo Pound Lake. Phases 1 and 2 would take place northwest of Lake Diefenbaker and would complete the Westside Irrigation Canal System while Phase 3 is the development of the Qu'Appelle South Irrigation System to the south of Lake Diefenbaker.

The Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion Project is connected to the Saskatchewan Rivers systems and has the potential to impact a large area of the province and into Manitoba. The Saskatchewan Rivers systems have already been highly impacted and degraded due to agriculture, conversion of native lands, oil spills and other industrial activity along the river.

As a result, many First Nations in Saskatchewan have serious concerns about future water security (particularly given climate change scenarios of drought for this region); food security; loss of lands with native habitats and associated wildlife; impacts to soils, waters, and fish habitat; loss of habitat for migratory birds; localized climactic changes due to increased irrigation; impacts to sacred sites and other cultural and heritage-sensitive areas; and finally, long-term cumulative impacts of water withdrawals and agrochemical inputs.

ISC does not have any through legislative or regulatory mechanisms that could manage the potential adverse/incidental effects of the project. ISC would not issue any licence, permit, authorization or approval for this project.

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1. Does your department or agency have a program or additional authority that may be relevant and could be considered as a potential solution to concerns expressed about the Project? In particular, the following issues have been raised by the requestor:
- Potential effects on Inherent and Treaty Rights in Saskatchewan
  - Potential impacts to sacred sites and other cultural and heritage-sensitive areas
  - Potential effects to food and water security including climate change impacts
  - Potential long-term cumulative impacts of water withdrawals and agrochemical inputs to the Saskatchewan River and the Saskatchewan River Delta that flow into Manitoba

