

Feb 26th, 2021

Natural Resources Conservation Board
250 – 5th St SW
Calgary, AB
T2P 0R4

Attention: Laura Friend, Manager, Board Reviews

Re: Scott Wagner SR1 NRCB Project Need and Justification (Crown Engagement with the Public)

Please find below the submissions for the SR1 Review.

Project need and Justification.

Crown Engagement with the Public

I would like to be at least considered a member of the public since being a landowner has been a challenging vocation. I, like all the landowners within the SR1 footprint found out about the proposed dam by reading the Calgary Herald ... so I guess that means that the GOA considered us to be no more important than any other Calgary Herald Reader. Prior to the 2014 announcement there was no public study of SR1, no communications with the affected community and zero engagement with landowners. Not sure how to say this ... a project that has this amount of money and profile ... you would think that it would have been well studied before a decision was announced. Most recent comments by GOA individuals and Honourable Rick McIver stated that they could not change direction away from SR1 since it would take too long to get approval for alternatives. It appears to me that the end justifies the means at all costs. Truly an upside down process!

The 2006 Flood report by past MLA George Groeneveld was well studied and had many public engagements. Is it any wonder why the upstream communities of the City of Calgary are consistently asking: Why SR1?? I do understand why the City of Calgary would be on-board ... anything would be better than the 2013 Flood, but does this justify the "Tyranny of the Masses" I should not ask a question that I don't want the answer for!!!.

Over the past seven years landowners have found many concerning areas in the GOA work re SR1: Grizzly Bears, Elk, Bull Trout, Frogs, Local Water Flow and Land Owner Impact. Study after study, community presentation after community presentation the GOA has ignored landowner input and facts brought forward. Many of the inaccuracies could have been avoided if Stantec consulted local landowners, and engaged with directly affected parties. To date there has been a much greater engagement with pretty much everyone other than the local SR1 landowners. When there has been engagement with local SR1 community it has been condescending and confrontational. The GOA was confrontational in the first landowner meeting. During this initial meeting with landowners they stated "the expropriation team is at the back of the room to speak with you".

As a member of the public and a landowner who will be deeply affected by the SR1 dam, the GOA has been very slow in responding to critical issues. I constantly ask myself how the GOA will deal with big issues such as design and building when they can't even effectively communicate with landowners. Here is small list of personal issues, however every landowner in SR1 has a list such as this, with most of these issues going back as long as five years:

- Well Water: most recently we read that our well will be capped at our house, but this begs the question of how we are getting water! Not sure we will accept hauling pails of dirty water from the dam meters away!
- Water table: we have an artesian well, our water table is near the surface. How are we going to deal with sewer in our basement when the septic field backs up? How much non-sewer flooding will we have in our basement caused by the SR1 Dam?
- Our house is built on swelling clay, how will swelling clay be affected by a dam with millions of tons of water weight and ground saturated right at our doorstep. Who is going to cover the damage if our foundation crumbles, heaves out of the ground or sinks into the ground ... I am not an engineer ... but I do know that swelling clay needs solutions. Our house has been engineered to deal with current swelling clay conditions, but no consideration has been made for SR1.
- Water line: we still don't know how far up our lawn the water line will go ... will it be 1 meter from our house, 5 meters from our house, 25 meters from our house? Kinda feeling like a broken record here: we have asked so many times! We specifically requested to have the boundary flagged last fall, Stantec at the request of the GOA showed up to perform the survey, ... to date, still no flags, no waterline definition ... yet again crickets.

As Landowners we have had to go through reams of GOA documentation to find the most serious issues in front of us (without any consultation or communication from the GOA). Serious issues have been uncovered that have implications have been uncovered:

- Rifle Hunting will be allowed on our front lawn
- Camping / Public access will be allowed on our front lawn

In general, we believe that the GOA does not consider the citizens living within the SR1 as worthy of the same rights as the numerous other citizen groups that they engage. I doubt that a homeowner in Rideau park would welcome campers set up on their back porch or deer being eviscerated on their front lawn. As landowners, we are left to search CRCAG announcements, Calgary Herald articles and GOA sites for information that directly affects us. Thank heavens to the many other landowners as the volume of information to digest is extreme, and the time commitment to protect a home that my wife and I built with hard earned money is outrageous. Seven years, stacks of information, countless hours, and many sleepless nights ... to have a GOA individual divisively state in 2020 that we can have a "smaller newer house".

Suggestions: The GOA could have put together a regular email containing landowner issues and items left outstanding; the end result may very well have been a much more receptive

Larndowner group. Lastly, if the GOA had engaged with Landowners on critical issues in a non-confrontational fashion trust would have increased!

Landowner trust in information supplied by the GOA is low. While justifying the SR1, the GOA has published many inaccurate facts regarding MC1. Here are a few examples:

The MC1 budget includes a 20% contingency that is not found in SR1.

The GOA justified SR1 over MC1 due to wildlife considerations. For example, the GOA initially published inaccurate facts claiming MC1 would have negative affects on Bull Trout populations. Communications to the GOA have pointed out that Bull Trout populations would benefit from MC1 as this species has the large and healthy populations in man made dams. I have noticed that GOA has modified their published sites on Bull Trout to now exclude Dams, fortunately the GOA has slightly modified their MC1 language to be slightly more favorable to MC1 Bull trout populations ... calling the increase in “ponds” being “potentially” favorable to Bull Trout.

The GOA made a big deal of suggesting Grizzly bear would be more deeply affected by MC1 over SR1. The Grizzly comments showed the lack of any pure science by the GOA, these facts have been exposed to the GOA but have never been acknowledged.

The GOA presented that the SR1 area had poor “Ungulate” habitat. This one is downright insane and conflicts with Fish and Wildlife having extended hunting seasons and open hunting tags due to population health. Pictures of large herds and calving pairs were provided!

After the 2014 shock announcement, the landowners began to get organized and study important decision factors the GOA was using: Grizzly was one that the GOA used extensively to justify SR1 over MC1. In 2015 the SR1 area had at least nine Grizzly bears! Fish and Wildlife appear to be concerned as they have moved at least four and possibly seven Grizzly from the area; guess this is somewhat of a solution to GOA facts on SR1. I digress here with an objective: the enclosed picture shows a Sow with three cubs, the Grizzly sow picture has a dead Elk with the location 50 meters east of highway 22 near the entrance to our property. What is interesting is the power of this majestic creature, the Sow dragged a 600 lb roadkill cow elk from the highway ditch, 50 meters by herself to feed her cubs. The “Grizzly” point here is Elk are linked to Grizzly Bear population health!

In October of 2020, I submitted my letter with a request to present to the NRCB. I was quite pleased that the GOA Legal Council stated that they were not opposed to me presenting. Furthermore, Mr Ron Kruhlak stated that the GOA would be in touch to discuss my issues; I was heartened that I might have a direct conversation in a constructive manner. To date: Crickets!

The experience to date with the GOA is the antithesis of an experience my wife and I had in 2018 with a pipeline company on a significant project. Just like the SR1 project, the pipeline project started with the Landowners concerned about the project, but two years after the engagement pipe is in the ground and life is going forward. In contrast seven years later the GOA is a long shot from completing this project!

I have always tried to adhere to ... “complaints without solutions are just complaints” So, A recommendation would be for the NRCB to have the GOA engage landowners in a constructive, non-confrontational manner.

Sincerely,

Scott Wagner

Reference Material:

- http://www.aema.alberta.ca/images/News/Provincial_Flood_Mitigation_Report.pdf