

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 Submission Project Need and Justification (Social and Economic Cost)

Please find below the submissions for the SR1 Review.

Project need and Justification.

Social and Economic Cost

You probably have already heard that the landowner families have roots in the community as far back as the 1880s. What you may not have heard is that the Springbank Park for All Season sits on land donated by one of the families. You might not have heard that Landowner discussions behind the scenes were common that we “were probably not doing ourselves any favours” by maintaining undeveloped land. You may not have heard that the landowners have had significant relationships with First Nations communities. You probably have not heard that the community showed up to fight a significant grass fire that threatened all of Springbank, and possibly Calgary, including my house in 2010; the Ranchers fought the fire while the fire departments stated they would not go into the fields to fight the fire. There is no wonder that the GOA picked this area as a potential dam since we have collectively maintained the land largely in its natural state, and have subsequently have very little population to vote against Government officials using the land for other things.

In 2014 the GOA shocked our community by announcing SR1. Community relationships go back generations with members growing up, socializing and working together. For example: Bill Copithorne, whose family owns a large chunk of the SR1 dam property, was a prior Reeve of Rocky View, an Uncle, and was a person who gave me a significant leg up in business. Bill passed this January and is the last of his generation; God Rest his soul. Bill was an honorable man and a gentleman and in the beginning after the SR1 announcement he stated: “Stick together, it is the only way forward”. In Early 2018, GOA purchased land from the Robinsons, without warning, from the two most senior directors of our Landowner group. Since this purchase event our community has not been the same. The GOA strategy of pitting neighbor against neighbor is complete and has reduced our community to separate groups without its previous core, which is contrary to Bill’s wisdom. This entire scenario could have been avoided with the GOA choosing to negotiate with the entire group, rather than using divide and conquer method. While we are a small number of people we were a tight community: the GOA actions to date on SR1 has taken community away from us! On a larger scale, the GOA has pitted the Calgary Elbow River communities against their neighbours to the west, rather than fostering a collaborative approach to find the best solution for all stakeholders.

The wider economic cost of SR1 has escalated greatly since the first announcement and will be felt by Albertans province wide. The economic cost started with an initial budget of \$189 million for SR1, with the most recent publication being \$420 million (Spring of 2020). Is the \$420 million SR1 cost accurate? I don't think so since I can easily add hundreds of millions to the already bloated budget. As the GOA is not the Bank of Canada, it has limited funds, and the debt will need to be paid by future generations. Unfortunately, as with most Government spending the SR1 linkage to debt will be a relatively short sound bite ... call this kicking the can down the road! What are the alternatives: The 2006 Flood Mitigation report discussed many alternatives and was tossed to the trash in 2014 without any public consideration. The 2014 announcement was made without public scrutiny. Is it any wonder that starting out with a untested decision and then doing everything you can to justify it has resulted in ballooning costs for the GOA. It is also clear that the GOA is less than transparent about all the costs of SR1 as they consistently hide behind NDAs, have other departments pay bills, and shrug as the overall bill balloons.

There is little I have to suggest on how the NRCB can repair the Community Social Damage brought on by SR1, what is done is done. There will be footnotes in the history books about SR1, one hopes that those making the GOA decisions will be held to account there. If my understanding of the NRCB mandate is correct, there is a lot that the NRCB can do to uncover the real costs of SR1. I believe this cost accountability of SR1 and public exposure to hidden costs should be a priority especially in today's economic times.

Sincerely,

Scott Wagner

Reference Material:

- Budget Rough Calculations:
 - Most Current Estimate Published is \$432 Million (Spring 2020 Estimate)
 - 20% Contingency??
 - Cost of Operations??
 - Bragg Creek: 42.2 Million
 - Rockyview: \$10 Million
 - Tsui Tina: \$32 Million
 - Glenmore Dam Upgrade: \$82 Million
 - Kiwanis?
 - Stoney Nations?
 - Blackfoot Nation?
 - Land Purchases
 - To date: ~ \$28 Million
 - Jones, Copithorne, Robinson, & Baker for Approx 10% of the land

- 90% of the Lands have yet to be purchased