



**Saskatchewan  
Water Security Agency**

**Agency Report to the  
Mackenzie River Basin Board**

**Meeting #66 of the  
Mackenzie River Basin Board  
November 25-26, 2020**

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For each topic in agency report, please include:

- Ministry/Department Contact Information
- Contact information related to specific topics listed in agency report
- Website addresses
- Photos, maps, illustrations, tables, and other visual-friendly media

## **1 Bilateral Water Management Agreements**

Northwest Territory, Alberta and Saskatchewan have recently become active again late in 2020 to advance bilateral agreements.

The most recent Saskatchewan and NWT working discussions were in January 2016 with a draft agreement at that time in a preliminary phase. At that time, work was underway to refine the wording and to develop the appendices. NWT and Saskatchewan have initiated work to progress the bilateral agreement again with a preliminary meeting in November 2020, followed by Saskatchewan identifying a lead negotiator and the next discussion scheduled in December 2020.

A draft agreement Alberta/Saskatchewan agreement modeled after the successfully signed Alberta/Northwest Territory (NWT) bilateral received legal guidance in 2019 and was further reviewed by technical representatives in Saskatchewan representing hydrology, hydrogeology, ecology and water quality. Further work did not advance in 2020, however most recently work on advancing the bilateral is being initiated and expect advancement in early 2021 beginning with Saskatchewan review being presented to Alberta for further discussion. There is general agreement on concepts, but content of the Appendices is outstanding and requires further discussion and clarification and the language needs further review.

Saskatchewan held initial conversations with stakeholders including First Nations and industry (Cameco and Areva). The sessions were early in 2014 throughout the MRB and in Saskatoon, Fond du Lac in August, and most recently with Cameco in January 2016. Consultations within government and with stakeholders will again follow completion of draft bilateral agreements.

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## **2 Water-Related Legislation / Policy / Regulations / Planning**

There are no water-related legislation / policy / regulation / planning items from Saskatchewan to report on in 2020.

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### **3 Science, Monitoring and Information**

There are no new information produced / new initiatives in Saskatchewan directly related to the MRBB.

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## 4 Major Projects

- There are no new developments in 2020.
- The Tazi Twe project will not proceed with construction until there is a viable business case for the project, which is largely dependent on economic activity in the north.
- The Tazi Twe project is a joint venture between SaskPower and the Black Lake First Nation through their development arm, Elizabeth Falls Hydro Limited Partnership.
- The project underwent environmental review with the EIS completed and Ministry of Environment approval in February 2017. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency approved the project in 2015.
- Black Lake First Nation asked the province and the federal government to develop regulations under First Nations Commercial and Industrial Development Act (FNCIDA)
- Saskatchewan agreed to enter negotiations aimed at regulating the project in accordance with provincial law;
- Canada agreed to enter negotiations aimed at regulating the project in accordance with Saskatchewan law;
- Canada, Black Lake First Nation and Saskatchewan have commenced negotiations of a Tripartite Agreement, which includes adaptation of the provincial regulations as regulations under FNCIDA, but negotiations are not complete and there is no anticipated date for concluding the negotiations.
- Demand in the province's north was expected to grow by between four and five per cent annually. Those predictions, however, have recently decreased to between one and two per cent annually, largely due to decreased mining activity in northern Saskatchewan.
- <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/products/84343>

### Cameco Rabbit Lake Mine

- There are no new developments in 2020.
- Cameco was considering expansion of Cameco's Rabbit Lake Tailings Management Facility, located 350 km north of La Ronge on the west side of Wollaston Lake to support Rabbit Lake's milling activities until approximately 2028.
- Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) has informed that with the new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012, a federal assessment is no longer required.
- On November 1, 2013, Rabbit Lake received CNSC license extension until October 31, 2023. Cameco was preparing the project expansion, EIS documents for the provincial EIA process.

- On April 21, 2016 Cameco announced it was suspending operations at the Rabbit Lake mine and laying off 500 employees citing the current economics and commodity prices.
- The Project Specific Guidelines were developed and have been submitted to the Ministry of Environment.
- <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/categories/83>

#### Highway 905:

- There are no new developments in 2020.
- The Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure proposed to construct an all-weather road from Stony Rapids to the south shore of Lake Athabasca near Fond-du-Lac in northern Saskatchewan.
- The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency issued the final Environmental Impact Statement Guidelines to the proponent in September 2016 and as of January 2017 were reviewing applications to determine funding allocations.
- Highway 905 is not currently an active project. No further work or environmental approvals will be proceeding until such time as it becomes a priority.
- The Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure notified the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada that they wished to terminate the federal environmental assessment for the Project and a Notice of Termination was issued December 11, 2019.
- [https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/exploration?projDocs=57501&selection\[document\\_type\]=document#](https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/exploration?projDocs=57501&selection[document_type]=document#)

#### Highway 914

- There are no new developments in 2020.
- Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways plans to submit the EIS report to the Ministry of Environment at a future date.
- The Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure is proposing to construct an all-weather road between the existing access roads to the McArthur River and the Cigar Lake mine sites to provide a more efficient route for trucks to access mines in northern Saskatchewan. The proposal remains under review. Terms of reference for Highway 914 were provided by Saskatchewan Environment in 2016. The Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency is considering designating the project under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (2012)
- Environmental Impact Statement work on the project is on-going. The project does not have a defined construction start date.
- <https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/#/categories/88>

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## **5. Events, Conferences and Seminars**

There are no planned key government/non-government meetings related to water management in the Mackenzie River Basin.



## **6. Other**

There are no other items to report on from Saskatchewan

