

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPOSER: MR. JACQUES GAGNON
PROPOSAL NAME: PREMIER HORTICULTURE LTD.
CLASS OF DEVELOPMENT: 2
TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT: MINING – PEAT HARVESTING & PROCESSING OPERATIONS
CLIENT FILE NO.: 4636.00

OVERVIEW:

On May 18, 2004, Manitoba Conservation received a Proposal dated May 13, 2004, from Premier Horticulture Ltd. respecting their existing peat mining Development comprised of: 1) their existing peat processing, composted bark processing, future manure (chicken and cows) additive process, and materials and product storage operations at their Giroux plant site located on private land, and their past, current, and future peat mining activities at their Giroux site covering a total Quarry Lease area of 271 hectares of Crown Land, collectively located on all or parts of Section 19,24,25, and 30, Township 7, Range 7 EPM within the Rural Municipality of Ste. Anne; and 2) their past, current and future peat mining activities at their Caribou site covering a total Quarry Lease area of 3,251 hectares of unincorporated Crown Land located on all or parts of Sections 3,7,8,9,10,11,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,28,29,30,31 and 32, Township 5, Range 16 EPM, and Sections 11,12,14,15,16,21,22,23,24 and 25, Township 5, Range 15 EPM. Reclamation of the Caribou and Giroux peat harvesting areas is also included in the scope of the proposal.

No public concern was received in response to the advertisement of this proposal in the Steinbach Carillon published on Thursday, June 23, 2004. The proposal was placed in the Public Registries at the St. James-Assiniboia Public Library, the Manitoba Eco-Network, Jake Epp Public Library (Steinbach) and the Conservation Library (Main). The proposal was distributed to TAC on June 14, 2004, with the closing date for TAC and Public comments on July 21, 2004.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC:

No public responses were received.

COMMENTS FROM THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency state that based on their staff survey, application of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* with respect to this proposal is not required. Environment Canada stated that the proposed mitigation measures will address their issues of concern and interest. They concur that site preparation should be carried out while the ground is still frozen prior to the return of migratory birds to minimize nesting impacts and rearing of migratory birds. Fisheries and Oceans state they will provide specialist advice on sediment control of discharge water into the Seine River under Section 36(3) of the Fisheries Act.

Sustainable Resource Management state that excess burning of branches and tree roots should be minimized to reduce local air emissions. They expressed concerns that there was no indication of the quantity of greenhouse gases that may be released during peat processing and to what extent mitigation measures will reduce these gases. Concerns also include implications of the Giroux site bordering a proposed ecological reserve. Comments were included that proposed mitigations measures for moderately affected areas lacked sufficient detail. They state that water from the harvesting sites and bark storage areas must meet or exceed Manitoba's Water Quality Standards, Objectives and Guidelines prior to entry of adjacent receiving water bodies. They stated that described mitigation measures for the Caribou and Giroux sites in the proposal were not reflected in the Tables. They state that given the sensitive nature of the Whitemouth River, and associated unique fish species, that diversion of the water into the Lake of the Woods watershed should not be recommended.

Disposition:

The comments and concerns were provided to the proponent for response. The proponent supplied additional information responding to concerns and questions. The concerns are addressed in the draft licence.

Industry, Trade and Mines state that Premier Horticulture Ltd. holds valid quarry leases which grant legal access to surface mineral exploration and processing of peat. They also state that their required closure plan has not been completed.

Disposition:

The concern has been provided to the proponent. Premier Horticulture Ltd. will provide closure plans before closure of the mining sites.

Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives state they have reviewed the proposal and have identified no concerns from an agricultural perspective.

Historic Resources Branch has reviewed the proposal and has no concerns with regard to this project's potential to impact heritage resources.

Transportation and Government Services state they have no concerns with the Environment Act proposal provided that vehicle load limits are adhered to for the respective roads.

Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade state that the land encompassing the Giroux harvesting and processing operation is within a designated "Rural Area" in *The Rural Municipality of Ste. Anne Development Plan*. An objective in the plan is the integration of a quarry mineral (including peat) extraction into the overall land use planning process. They also state that if Premier wishes to expand their Giroux operation beyond what is originally approved they would require a Conditional Use order from the municipality. They also state they have no concerns with the proposal.

Disposition

The information was provided to the proponent. Premier replied that they do not plan to expand their Giroux operation. The peat harvesting operation is in a reclamation mode and the processing operation will not be expanded.

Water Stewardship had recommended that the proponent not divert water into the Lake of the Woods watershed. The proponent was to conduct a water balance to determine the amount of water that is transferred from one basin to another or conduct an alternative analysis of reasonable options and compare each on the basis of cost effectiveness, technical feasibility and environmental effects.

Disposition

Concerns are addressed in the draft licence.

PUBLIC HEARING:

No public hearing will be conducted.

RECOMMENDATION:

TAC concerns are addressed in the draft licence.

The responsibility for enforcement of the Licence should be assigned to the responsible region.

A draft Environment Act Licence is attached for the Director's consideration.

PREPARED BY:

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April 20, 2006

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