

Pressing environmental issues in manitoba

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Pressing Environmental Issues in Manitoba This paper seeks to zero in on two key Manitoba environmental concerns based on a variety of environmental peer-reviewed scholarly articles and books. It will especially reference “ Environmental Change and Challenge” by Dearden P. and B. Mitchell.

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To assess environmental concerns in Manitoba, this article will first examine the economic activities that define this prime Canadian province since human activity poses a major hurdle in curbing global environmental degradation. Manitoba (meaning “ the Great Spirit” in native Cree language) is a province located in the Prairies of Canada (Barry, 2010). Its capital city is Winnipeg. The province mainly consists of manufacturing and mining industries. Agricultural activity is mainly concentrated within the western and southern parts of the province that boast of high soil fertility, favorable continental climatic conditions and a constant water supply courtesy of many rivers and thousands of lakes. Fishing is also a key industry in Manitoba with Lakes Winnipeg and Manitoba being major hubs of the sector (Lawson, 2004). Due to the brevity of this article, I will focus on two key issues affecting Manitoba’s environment, that is mining and poor waste management.

Impact of Mining on Manitoba’s Environment

Manitoba’s mining industry is currently worth over \$2. 5 billion with peat, zinc, silver, gold, copper, platinum, cobalt and nickel being the major metal products of this sector. Mining has however been a major threat to terrestrial biodiversity in Manitoba through land conversions and pollution (Wellington, 1997). A key environmental concern in mining has always centered on the

rehabilitation of old, orphaned mines which consist of steep excavations, shafts and exploration trenches. Despite mining being a key revenue generator for Manitoba's government, public safety has been compromised after abandoned mines are left unattended since such mines pose a threat to local communities living nearby. The Mine Closure Regulation which was approved in 1999 led to the establishment of The Orphaned and Abandoned Mines Program (OAMS) mandated to deal with such mines by sealing them using Otto Bayer's Polyurethane foam (PUF) technology (Priscu et al, 2009). Many of these abandoned sites are situated within the Precambrian Shield which has massive gold deposits. Provincial Parks, aquatic life and areas with dense vegetation have not been spared due to discovery of more valuable metal deposits under them which eventually results in encroachment by the mining industry.

Impact of Poor Waste Management on Manitoba's Environment

Industry plays a major part in Manitoba's development. However, hazardous waste mainly originates from Manitoba's industries and exhibit a variety of harmful radiological, corrosive, bio hazardous, explosive and toxic properties. Manitoba's annual waste from household and industries combined is estimated to be about 945, 000 tonnes. This is due to inefficiencies in production of goods and services which in turn leads to depletion of valuable natural resources at unprecedented and extreme levels (Brown, 2000). In addition, the costs incurred by Manitoba's government and private sector in regards to management of hazardous waste keeps escalating. Recycling has been championed as one of the most recommended methods of dealing with hazardous waste in accordance with

The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Act (2006) and The Waste Reduction and Prevention Act of 2010.

Conclusion

Climate change has been the major concern in global environmental affairs. However, climate change is as a result of human activities on the ground (Adams, 2008). Non-biodegradable waste and destruction of flora and fauna to extract precious metals has been Manitoba's greatest challenge. All in all the bottom line still remains that resources are limited and Manitoba needs a self-sustaining environment for today and future generations to come.

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