

April 30, 2009

**FLOODWAY AUTHORITY AMENDMENT ACT
INTRODUCED IN MANITOBA LEGISLATURE**

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**Bill Would Expand Manitoba Floodway Authority's Mandate
To Manage Road Construction on East Side of Lake Winnipeg: Lemieux**

The Government of Manitoba has introduced legislation that would enable the Manitoba Floodway Authority (MFA) to oversee construction of an all-season road on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation Minister Ron Lemieux announced today in the legislature.

"For many years, First Nations people living on the east side of Lake Winnipeg have been calling for an all-season road that would permanently link communities as well as improve access and economic development opportunities for the region," said Lemieux. "The construction of this road provides an incredible opportunity to help lower transportation costs, increase economic development opportunities and enhance the quality of life for residents living in the remote and isolated communities of this region."

The proposed legislation would formally expand the MFA's mandate to assume responsibility for the East Side Transportation Initiative. The initiative includes construction of a 170-kilometre, all-season road from PR 304 near Manigotagan to Bloodvein First Nation and through to Berens River First Nation. The initiative also includes a study to examine potential transportation infrastructure improvements for the remainder of the entire region.

Lemieux noted this legislation would also change the name of the Manitoba Floodway Authority to the Manitoba Floodway and East Side Road Authority.

"This new legislation follows though on key recommendations and the commitment we made to east side First Nations in the *Promises to Keep* report that was done in 2004 after extensive talks with First Nations People," said Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport Minister Eric Robinson, acting minister of Aboriginal and northern affairs. "One finding of the study concluded that an all-weather road would be a solution to long-term transportation issues in the area and today we make the dream of an all-weather road a reality for the many residents in this region."

"The MFA has been working with the Aboriginal community to ensure employment and economic development opportunities for Aboriginal contractors on the floodway project," said Ernie Gilroy, CEO of the MFA. "This new role will allow us to continue to build on the success of this approach."

Lemieux noted that a key focus will be to ensure that First Nations people living in the area have a meaningful role in the construction of the road and that employment and economic development opportunities flow to the local communities.

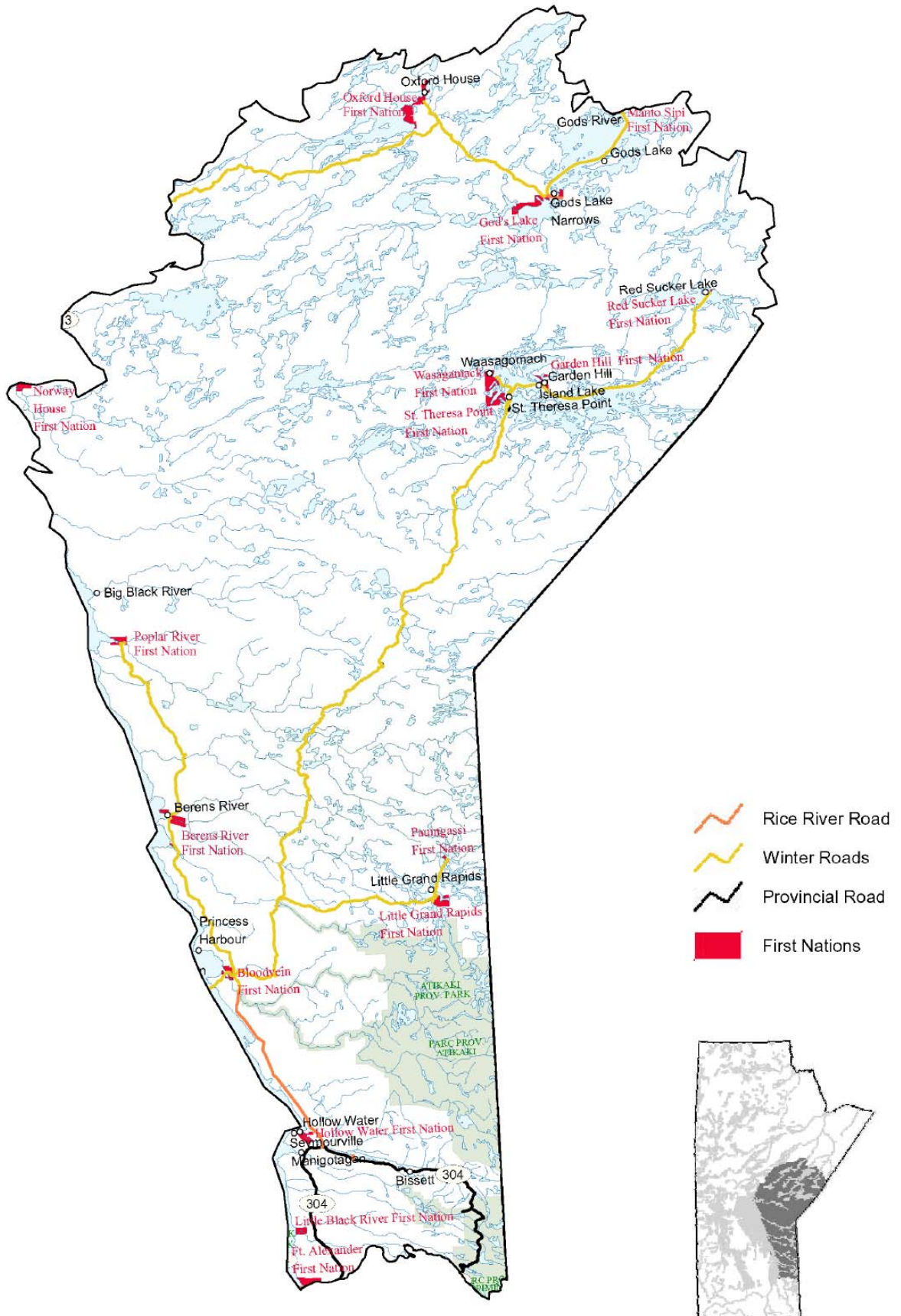
“First Nations communities have been involved in the process and their involvement will continue as we work together to improve road access for the people who live on the east side,” said Lemieux.

Lemieux noted that in order to move forward with the environmental licensing process for construction of the all-season road in a timely manner, an interim agency, the East Side Road Authority, Inc., has already been established. On January 30, an environmental application to begin the environmental licensing process was filed with Manitoba Conservation. Pending all necessary environmental approvals, construction of the all-season road is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2010, while upgrades to the Rice River Road and other preliminary work is ongoing.

More information on the East Side Transportation Initiative is available at:
www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ATTACHED

East Side Transportation Study Area



DOC: East Side Road.T&I.AH
Contact: Jodee