

# Towards 'no net loss' of wetland benefits in Manitoba



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Manitoba Sustainable Development



# The Manitoba Landscape



# Current Legislation and Policy

- Water Rights Act
- Planning Act
- Water Protection Act - IWMP
- Environment Act
- MOUs requiring offsets



# WATER RIGHTS LICENCE



***The Water Rights Act* states that no person shall control water or construct, establish or maintain any water control works unless he or she has a valid and subsisting licence to do so.**

- Completed licence application along with a \$25 fee
- Each application reviewed individually by the Department
- Assessment report prepared and circulated as necessary
- Licence issued or denied
- If issued, project sites are inspected prior to construction and the applicant proceeds with construction of the project

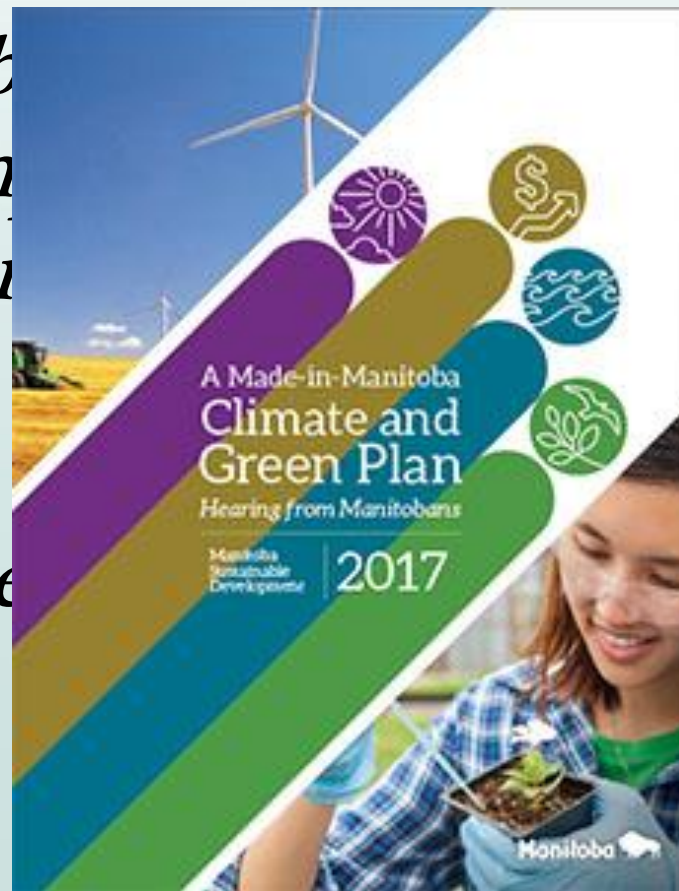
## Our Mandate

*“Manitoba Sustainable Development will implement watershed-based planning for drainage and water resource management with a goal of no-net-loss of water retention capacity in watersheds.”*

# Our Mandate


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A comprehensive, **watershed-based** policy framework that will streamline and coordinate provincial programs and policy in the context of **watersheds**.

Specific components of the framework are being developed. Tools will include incentive programming (GROW) and regulatory approaches to retain, restore and enhance wetlands on Manitoba's agricultural landscape. Extension will be an important consideration to support policy implementation.

## **Our Response**

# Preliminary consultation- Fall 2017

- Public, industry and stakeholder consultation.
- A series of “What we Heard” documents summarizing feedback are available online



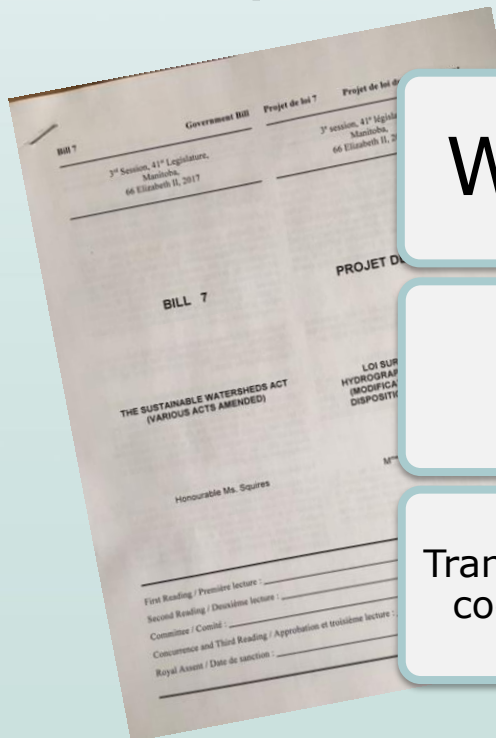


## What we Heard regarding wetlands:

- Protect Class 3, 4, 5 wetlands
- Support for hierarchical progression
- Some respondents favored ‘net gain’ of EG&S and also reward or incent protection of existing wetlands
- Offsets should be administered by an impartial 3<sup>rd</sup> party
- Some respondents pointed to the EG&S grasslands provide as equal or greater than wetland EG&S
- A ‘bid’ system may be an efficient instrument to achieve our offsets for the least cost

# Bill 7- the Sustainable Watersheds Act

- Amends four existing pieces of legislation
- Comprehensive, modern and enabling



Watershed governance

Drainage

No net  
loss of  
wetland  
benefits

Transboundary  
cooperation

Nutrients

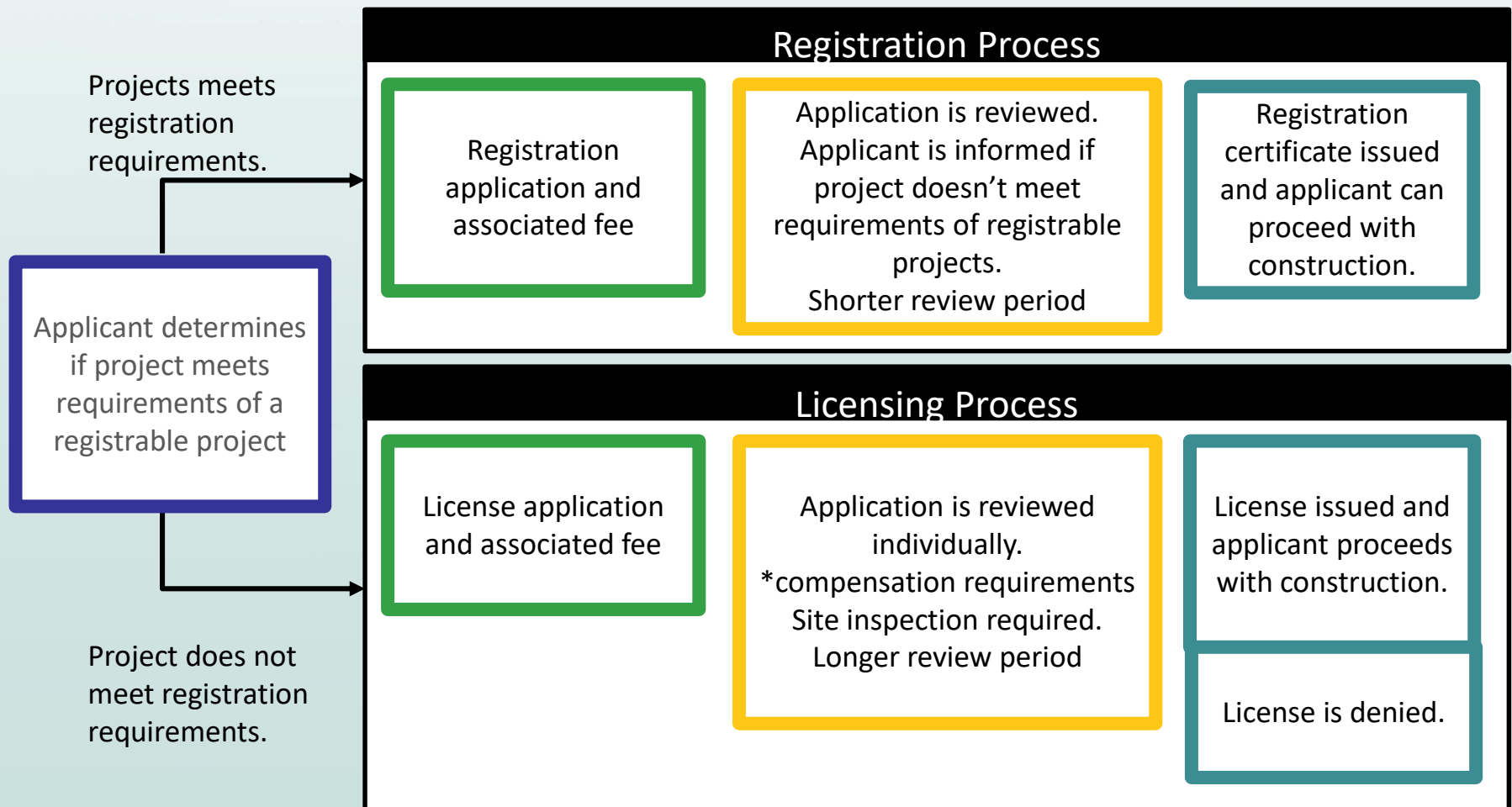
# No net loss of wetland benefits

## - The Water Rights Act



- Specific requirements to compensate for proposed wetland drainage will be outlined in regulations (currently under development)
- Preliminary concept is to continue to protect S&K Class 4 and 5 wetlands by prohibiting drainage, but add new requirement to offset loss of Class 3 wetlands
- Amount of offset required is likely to vary depending on the value of the impacted wetland
- Is based on mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, minimization, compensation

# Streamlining Drainage Licensing - The Water Rights Act



# Regulation Policy Development

- Who's in?
- Competing interests
- Mandate to provide key policy advice



Classification of Registrable Projects

Registration Process & Fees

Wetland Classification, Assessment and Compensation

Watershed Plans for Drainage and Retention

## Challenges we have

- Landowner/general public consultation
- Not all wetlands are equal
- Wetland inventory
- Education for landowners
- Wetland Ratios - MHHC
- Finding people who want to restore a wetland
- Balancing the requirements of regulation with incentive programming.

## Next steps:

- Bill is proceeding through legislative process
- Coming into Force will vary depending on Parts of the Bill
- Continue to review how wetland policy is being developed and implemented
- Accompanying regulations will need to be drafted. Public and stakeholders will need to be consulted.

# For more information

Full copies of the Bill text is available at:

<http://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/41-3/b007e.php>