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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SCO encourages more dialogue with First Nations over Manitoba-Minnesota Transmission Project

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Premier Brian Pallister has stated publically that his administration has “gone above and beyond” in the consultation process with First Nations communities that will be impacted by the Manitoba-Minnesota Transmission Project. These statements simply cannot be true when multiple communities such as Long Plain First Nation and Roseau River Anishinaabe Nation have expressed their concern and frustration with the inadequate consultation and engagement process. There was a press release issued this week on Treaty One Territory stating an encouraging approach to relations between the government and First Nations in Manitoba, however, earlier that same week Long Plain withdrew from the project and listed the ways they have not been respected on Treaty One Territory.

Manitoba Hydro has had a tumultuous relationship with the Provincial Government as seen by the resignation of the majority of its board in the past year. Expediting the path forward against the stated concerns of First Nations communities has the potential to see this development end up before the courts. Former Manitoba Hydro board members themselves admitted that their “limited latitude” to consult with First Nations and the Metis Nation impeded negotiations and lead to the delay in the federal approval process on the Manitoba Minnesota Transmission Line Project. Indeed, the Premier, in lock-step with the old reform perspective of Indigenous Peoples as a special interest group, has made no significant effort to meet with First Nations that have been vocal on the shortcomings in the consultation process on the provincial license.

We are at a critical point in the relationship between the Southern First Nations and the Province. There has been no respect nor implementation of the legally binding exercise to consult with Indigenous Peoples where Aboriginal and Treaty Rights are impacted, and ensuring the Crown’s duty to consult. Premier Pallister and this government must recognize the Aboriginal and Treaty Rights of First Nations. It is the foundation of our country; it is the foundation of this territory and this land of Manitoba. As Canada moves through successive steps towards Reconciliation, SCO is committed to the undying belief of our Anishinaabe and Dakota ancestors - that we all are integral - and in the spirit of the Treaties, that we must all prosper and be well – that is the way.

SCO calls upon the Premier of Manitoba to meet with concerned First Nations leadership towards this goal, and to honour the Nation to Nation Relationship.