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PROVINCE TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR ASSINIBOINE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

Group will Increase Co-operation across Jurisdictions, Long-term Planning for Fighting Floods: Premier Selinger

TORONTO-The Manitoba government will be providing an initial \$50,000 contribution toward the startup activities of the new Assiniboine River Basin Commission, Premier Greg Selinger announced here today.

"Flood waters know no boundaries so our solutions and strategies for fighting floods have to include our neighbours," said Premier Selinger. "We will keep building on the good work already being done by our conservation and emergency measures departments with Saskatchewan and North Dakota to make sure we can keep families, businesses and properties safe in our province and across regions."

The Assiniboine River Basin Initiative (ARBI) was established to encourage improved dialogue among a broad range of stakeholders including conservation groups, scientists, agricultural producers, municipalities, First Nations, water agencies, and the provincial, state and local governments involved in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and North Dakota. The ARBI was modelled along the lines of the Red River Basin Commission, a grassroots-led organization that has served as an effective forum for cross-border dialogue and planning in the Red River Valley for well over a decade.

"Unfortunately, we are seeing more frequent and severe flooding not only in Manitoba but across North America," said Premier Selinger. "We look forward to working closely with this new organization on improvements in water management and planning throughout the basin including flood forecasting, water storage and drainage practices, and priorities for upgrading mitigation infrastructure."

Existing institutions such as the Prairie Provinces Water Board and International Souris River Board will continue to play an important part in addressing water issues in the Assiniboine basin, the premier noted.

The ARBI has set up an interim executive committee and is meeting today in Minot, N.D., to discuss its structure and membership. Like the Red River Basin Commission, the Assiniboine basin group is seeking financial support from jurisdictions in the region.