

**REASONS FOR DECISION
MINISTERIAL APPROVAL
PURSUANT TO SECTION 15
*THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ACT***

**INVERGORDON LANDFILL INCORPORATED
INVERGORDON LANDFILL PROJECT**

Introduction

In December 2023, 102138921 Sask Limited (Invergordon Landfill Inc.; the proponent), submitted a technical proposal for screening according to section 7 of *The Environmental Assessment Act* (the Act). In April 2024, the Ministry of Environment (ministry) issued a determination that the project was a development as defined under section 2(d) of the Act and required to obtain a ministerial decision under section 15 of the Act. Prior to receiving a decision, the project is required to undergo an environmental impact assessment (assessment). The assessment provides information needed by the Minister of Environment (the Minister) to determine if adequate environmental safeguards are in place for a proposed project to proceed and, if so, under what conditions.

Invergordon Landfill Inc. is proposing to construct, operate and decommission a landfill approximately six kilometres (km) west of Yellow Creek, Saskatchewan within the Rural Municipality (RM) of Invergordon No. 430. The landfill will accept waste primarily from north-central Saskatchewan. The project will include the construction of a perimeter embankment, two landfill cells, a leachate collection system, two runoff holding ponds, and supporting infrastructure including an operations area. Conceptual plans for a second phase of the project, including additional landfill cells, were identified by the proponent during the assessment. This second phase is not included within the scope of the approval and would be subject to further review and approval under Section 16 of the Act.

Application of *The Environmental Assessment Act*

Under subsection 8(1) of the Act, a person shall not proceed with a “development” until ministerial approval has been received. The Act further sets out process requirements for the undertaking of the assessment.

Pursuant to section 10 of the Act, public notice of the assessment was shared in local newspapers and on social media channels in September 2024. A draft terms of reference was submitted in September 2024. After minor revisions, the terms of reference was accepted in December 2024.

A draft environmental impact statement (statement) was received on December 11,

2024. Technical review of this document identified environmental and technical issues that required revisions and additional clarification before the assessment process could proceed. Invergordon Landfill Inc. submitted a revised statement on March 11, 2025; however, minor deficiencies remained in the statement and the ministry requested further information and clarification. A final statement was submitted by the proponent on April 7, 2025. On April 11, 2025 the ministry determined the statement contained adequate information to proceed with public review.

Comments received during the technical and public review of the statement allow for an informed decision regarding the technical merits and potential environmental impacts of the project. The ministry conducted detailed analysis of all information collected during the assessment and this information has been considered in the decision on the project.

Ministerial decision options under subsection 15(1) of the Act are:

- (a) Give approval to proceed with the development and impose any terms and conditions considered necessary or advisable; or
- (b) Refuse to approve the development.

The ministry conducted detailed analysis of all information presented in the statement. I have carefully considered this analysis and information in the course of reaching my decision on the project.

Engagement and Public Review

Invergordon Landfill Inc. engaged with the public and interested stakeholders including landowners, the RM of Invergordon, and existing waste management facilities in the region. Engagement methods included mail and email distribution of project information, newspaper postings, in-person meetings, phone calls and a public open house. Comments included concerns regarding socio-economic issues including traffic and roadway safety, impacts to RM roads and the need for the project. Concerns related to potential ecological and public health impacts, including potential impacts to ground and surface water were also identified. Invergordon Landfill Inc. will implement a complaint resolution process to manage potential concerns from the public and stakeholders during the life of the project. The proponent will continue engagement activities throughout the life of the project.

The ministry also received comments from the public and stakeholders during the assessment, including one written comment during the public review period. Concerns identified included potential impacts to quality of life, property values, the visual landscape, impacts to the economic viability of existing waste management facilities, and general disagreement about project benefits. Concerns

regarding impacts to wildlife and habitat and water and water quality were also received.

The project is located on private land with no right of access to exercise Treaty and Aboriginal rights and the duty to consult was not triggered according to the provincial *First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework, 2023*.

Reasons for Decision

I am satisfied that Invergordon Landfill Inc. has met all the requirements of the Act, thereby requiring a decision to be made pursuant to section 15 of the Act. Having made my decision to issue a Ministerial Approval, the Act requires me, pursuant to subsection 15(2), to state the reasons for the decision.

General Siting Considerations

Invergordon Landfill Inc. considered factors including environmental sustainability, cost-effectiveness for waste producers, and general public acceptability when considering potential locations for the project. The project location was selected based on the proximity to a historic RM landfill to align with historic traffic trends, isolation from occupied areas, proximity to highways, prevalence of cleared land on the site, and the presence of competent till soil with compatible waste containment properties.

Terrestrial Environment

The project will be located on one quarter section (SW 06-44-23-W2M) of privately owned land. The project development area (PDA) where direct disturbance will occur is approximately 21.9 hectares (ha). The project was sited on previously disturbed lands to the extent possible; however, residual adverse effects to vegetation and wetlands will result from clearing during construction and maintenance activities during operations. Approximately 10.2 ha of cropland, 9.0 ha of forest and modified grassland, and 2.7 ha of wetland habitat will be cleared or altered during construction and operation. Residual effects to vegetation and wetlands are expected to be partially reversible upon decommissioning. Project components will be removed from site, except for the landfill mound, and the site will be reclaimed with forage species. Runoff ponds will also be left on site as wetland habitat.

To further reduce project impacts to vegetation and wetlands, the proponent will employ mitigation measures including minimizing vegetation clearing to the extent possible, completing construction activities under dry and frozen conditions, and utilizing erosion and sediment control measures. The proponent will also implement a weed management plan for all project phases.

Two plant species of conservation concern (SOCC) were detected during the rare vascular plant surveys. Floating crystal wort (SU, Status uncertain due to limited or conflicting information) and striped coralroot (S3, vulnerable) were located within the PDA. One wildlife SOCC, common nighthawk (S4B, Special Concern under the *Species at Risk Act*), was observed during wildlife surveys. Construction and operation of the project will result in the loss of some habitat for SOCC as well as increase sensory disturbance and wildlife mortality risk.

To mitigate impacts to plant and wildlife SOCC, the proponent will adhere to the setback and timing restrictions outlined in the *Saskatchewan Activity Restriction Guidelines for Sensitive Species*, where possible, and conduct pre-construction wildlife searches as required. A qualified environmental monitor will be on site during site preparation and earthwork activities to ensure appropriate mitigation measures are in place to minimize impacts to sensitive habitat and species. Installation of perimeter fencing to limit wildlife access, use of noise abatement equipment on machinery, restricting operations to daylight hours, and managing organic waste to minimize wildlife attractants will further reduce impacts.

Water and Aquatic Environment

Two Class V (permanent) wetlands and nine Class III (seasonal) wetlands will be impacted by the project. No watercourses or waterbodies will be impacted by the project. To mitigate impacts to surface water, perimeter embankments will be constructed to contain on-site surface runoff and to direct off-site surface water away from the project. External ditches within the perimeter embankment will also ensure that the project does not impact drainage pathways outside the project. Grading within the site will ensure on-site runoff is directed towards established runoff ponds.

The project will generate leachate from the landfill cells that has the potential to impact groundwater as well as surface water connected to underlying groundwater flow systems. The proponent completed desktop and field assessments as well as developed a conceptual site model to characterize potential risks to ground and surface water. No impacts to the Middle Floral aquifer were identified based on the rate of infiltration and depth of the aquifer. A sand unit located partially below the landfill cells was identified as a potentially important groundwater flow pathway to a wetland located partially off-site on Fish and Wildlife Development Fund land. Modelling predicted that groundwater potentially impacted by the landfill could reach this wetland after approximately 60 years. However, natural degradation of the leachate in combination with the use of best management practices for landfill operation is expected to significantly reduce the concentration of substances of potential concern (SOPC) in groundwater before reaching the wetland. Any off-site releases to surface water or groundwater will be required to meet applicable *Saskatchewan Environmental Quality Guidelines*. If monitoring data trends identify

the potential for off-site exceedances, the proponent will be required to undertake contingency or remedial measures approved by the ministry.

The proponent will implement mitigation measures that will avoid or minimize impacts to surface and groundwater. Measures include utilizing engineered compacted clay liners and leachate collection systems within each landfill cell, routine liner inspections during construction and operation, management of leachate levels to minimize hydraulic pressures on the liners, use of a double-lined containment system with a leak detection layer in the leachate pond, and use of surface water management infrastructure to redirect runoff away from the landfill cells.

Invergordon Landfill Inc. will be required to obtain permits to construct and operate the project under *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010* and associated regulations. A detailed site suitability report will be required as part of the Permit to Construct an Industrial Waste Works. The project will also be required to have an approved environmental monitoring plan in place for the life of the project, including post-closure. This includes regular monitoring of groundwater and surface water. Additionally, the proponent will be required to collect baseline groundwater quality data for the sand unit prior to operation. Annual reports by a Qualified Person must be submitted to the ministry including raw data, trend analysis, and identification of SOPC in accordance with the Endpoint Selection Standard.

Atmospheric and Acoustic Environment

The project will generate greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) through anaerobic decomposition of waste. Landfill gas emissions will occur during the operations stage and for a lag period post-closure as the landfilled waste continues to decompose. GHG emissions will also be released from construction equipment and waste hauling trucks throughout the construction, operation, and decommissioning stages of the project.

Increased diversion of organic waste from landfills as supported by the ministry's *Solid Waste Management Strategy* could reduce landfill gas generation over time. Siting the project in a central location based on the anticipated waste collection area, utilizing paved roads for waste hauling where possible, and the use of dust suppressants along roadways and active work areas as required will also reduce air emissions from the project.

Heritage and Socio-Economic Environment

The project will not impact any known archaeological resources and the potential for intact archaeological sites within the PDA is low. Heritage clearance from the

Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport's Heritage Conservation Branch was provided to Invergordon Landfill Inc. for the project.

The project will generate approximately eight full-time construction jobs and two to three full-time operational jobs. It is expected that people will stay in local communities and commute to the worksite, resulting in residual positive effects from increased employment and business opportunities.

Approximately 7,000 tonnes per year of waste will be diverted from the City of Prince Albert and the City of Melfort landfills. The remaining 5,000 tonnes per year of waste expected to be collected for the project will be sourced from newly contracted commercial and industrial entities as well as newly contracted municipal customers. Invergordon Landfill Inc. has indicated that although there will be diversion of waste from some regional landfills, the overall impact on existing landfills is expected to be minor. Invergordon Landfill Inc. has indicated that they will source waste from commercial, industrial, and municipal entities that are not currently under waste management contract with any existing landfill development.

The site will be accessed from RM Road 776 and Highway 20, located west of the PDA. This access route was selected in consultation with the Ministry of Highways to avoid the use of Highway 41, which has an acutely angled intersection and no turning lanes. Invergordon Landfill Inc. has estimated that six waste trucks per day will utilize this traffic route. Invergordon Landfill Inc. has committed to developing a profit-sharing agreement with the RM of Invergordon to contribute towards road maintenance.

Decommissioning, Reclamation and Closure Plan

The purpose of decommissioning and reclamation will be to restore the project area to a defined post-closure end use, which is anticipated to be either recreational or forage. The landfill mounds will be covered by a permanent engineered cover that meets acceptable standards at the time of decommissioning. Surface infrastructure, including buildings and other structures, will be demolished or repurposed, and the leachate pond will be decommissioned.

Invergordon Landfill Inc. will be required to prepare a detailed decommissioning and reclamation plan as part of required permitting in accordance with the *Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*. This plan will include an inventory of the elements proposed for construction, a strategy and cost estimate for decommissioning and reclaiming each identified element and a long-term closure monitoring strategy which will be dependent on local groundwater trends and geochemical behavior identified during site operation. Invergordon Landfill Inc. will also be required to provide a financial assurance to the ministry prior to construction for the estimated costs associated with decommissioning and reclamation.

After the site is fully decommissioned, the proposed facility will enter a post-closure period during which time the site will be monitored for potential impacts to groundwater and surface water. Post-closure monitoring will occur for the duration of time necessary for natural processes to reduce plume concentrations to below applicable guidelines; however, a minimum period of 25 years is expected. Transfer of land ownership will only occur at the end of the post-closure monitoring, after it has been demonstrated that any impacts to surface or groundwater are below SEQG standards or are consistent with naturally occurring background levels.

Conclusion

The ministry and technical reviewers are satisfied the overall environmental impacts of the project are well understood, and that if the mitigations and environmental protection measures outlined in the statement are implemented, and terms and conditions are imposed as presented in my approval, adverse effects can be minimized, and benefits enhanced.

This conclusion is based on the proponent's adherence to the commitments as documented in the statement, on my ability as the Minister of Environment to impose specific conditions at this time, and on the knowledge that additional environmental protection requirements can be imposed through terms and conditions forming parts of permits and licences required by provincial and federal legislation.

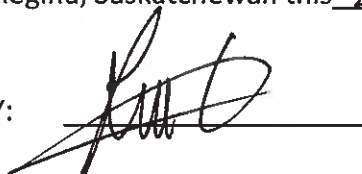
The Ministerial Approval for the development includes terms and conditions designed to promote the elimination and control of adverse environmental effects associated with the development. Included are requirements that Invergordon Landfill Inc.:

- (a) Proceed with the development in accordance with the statement;
- (b) Provide notification of any change; and
- (c) Follow the requirements of other applicable laws and regulations.

These conditions, plus the measures proposed in the statement, and the regulatory framework applicable to the project, now and in the future, are adequate to address all issues related to the project.

Dated at Regina, Saskatchewan this 23 day of June, 2025

ISSUED BY:



Travis Keisig
Minister of Environment