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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

The Honourable Bernard Valcourt
Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development
441-S, Centre Block
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

March 25th 2015

RE: Kashechewan Dyke Risks

Minister Valcourt,

We are weeks away from the flooding season in Kashechewan and a new report on the failings of the Kashechewan dyke are raising serious concerns about the safety of this community. No doubt you will remember how the community was forced to be evacuated in 2005, flooded and evacuated in 2006, evacuated in 2008, evacuated in 2012-2013, evacuated in 2013 and flooded and evacuated in 2014. Many residents are still stuck temporarily living in Kapuskasing from last spring's flood and emergency evacuation. Moreover, the 2014-2015 climate patterns suggest the possibility of another flood in spring 2015.

You will also, no doubt, remember how your government walked away in 2007 from a plan to move this community off the flood plain to a safer site. Instead of working with the community on a relocation plan, the government opted to spend millions on evacuations and repairs to infrastructure damaged from repeated flooding. What is most concerning is that you are fully aware that, even with all these expenditures, that the safety of people in the community cannot be assured.

In June 2014, you admitted this in a signed order paper question where it was stated that despite having spent \$14.8 million on repairs to the dyke the community was at risk. The response stated, *"the dyke will not comply with the relevant safety measures as it does not meet the minimum height requirements."*

A new report by a highly qualified engineering company with decades of experience in the dam sector, confirms this risk while raising even more alarm bells. They point out that people in the community are at "INTOLERABLE RISK" because of failures in the dyke:

"The Kashechewan Ring Dyke, constructed in 1995 is in deteriorating condition. On the basis of this review it was concluded that the current state of practice for dam safety for the Kashechewan Ring Dike is not in line with accepted practice... the results clearly indicate that the risk control measures currently in place at the

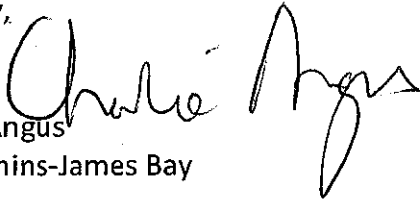
*Kashechewan Ring Dyke do not meet modern standards for dam safety...The Dyke presents an **INTOLERABLE RISK** (as defined by the CDA) to the community in terms of overtopping, slope stability and piping risks."*

I don't have to remind you that if there was a significant flooding event the lives of people in this community would be put at serious risk. A sudden surge of water in the middle of the night could lead to deaths of young people and the elderly. There is no municipality anywhere in the country that would be left in such a precarious state of danger because of identified failings of basic infrastructure. The flooding season will be on us soon. What immediate steps will you take to ensure the safety of residents of Kashechewan? What long term steps will you take to work with the people of Kashechewan on ensuring they are able to live in safety from flooding and decrepit infrastructure?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Charlie Angus
MP Timmins-James Bay

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlie Angus". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "C".