

SIO Last draft for May 13 on 13th

With respect to Sio Silica and the broader concerns many residents have regarding groundwater, industrial expansion, and long-term public confidence:

I have heard the argument that once the Province becomes involved, there is little a municipality can do.

I do not accept that as leadership.

Municipal leadership does not end simply because another level of government holds formal authority.

Leadership means advocating, organizing, questioning, lobbying, coordinating regionally, and pursuing every legitimate avenue available to protect potable water security, democratic legitimacy, and long-term public confidence.

Residents are not simply asking about one project.

They are asking:

- what this region may become over time
- what industrial pressures may follow
- who benefits
- who carries the long-term risk
- and whether the public truly has meaningful oversight before irreversible decisions are made

This matter carries potentially substantial ripple effects extending far beyond Springfield itself, potentially affecting tens of thousands of families throughout eastern Manitoba over generations.

That is why I believe meaningful regional democratic consultation — including serious exploration of a legitimate referendum framework — deserves consideration.

Not symbolic engagement.

Not public-relations exercises.

But legitimate democratic participation capable of restoring long-term public confidence.

Concerns surrounding Sio Silica are no longer isolated to Springfield.

Citizen advocates, regional residents, and recent CBC reporting have all contributed to growing scrutiny surrounding groundwater protection, regional implications, and the adequacy of public oversight.

In addition, questions surrounding corporate structure, international financial arrangements, and differences between investor-oriented materials and public understanding within Manitoba deserve proper public examination and provincial scrutiny.

Residents are also entitled to ask where the long-term economic benefit of projects like this ultimately flows.

When corporate and financial structures extend beyond Manitoba and even beyond North America, it is reasonable for residents to question how much long-term value, control, and accountability truly remain within the communities assuming the environmental and regional risk.

My own submissions to the Clean Environment Commission have already raised concerns requiring transparent clarification through legitimate review processes.

That is not anti-development.

That is responsible governance.

Because residents deserve:

- documented process
- transparent environmental review
- financial clarity
- implementation accountability
- and decisions capable of withstanding public scrutiny on the record

Municipal governance is not simply about describing concerns.

It is about working through them responsibly, transparently, operationally, and with the long-term protection of communities in mind.

Saying “nothing can be done” before every available avenue has been pursued is not governance.

It is surrender.