



# MANITOBA ECO-NETWORK

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April 13, 2023

To: City of Winnipeg Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment Committee

**RE: The Montreal Pledge – Cities United in Action for Biodiversity**

We are writing to offer our support for the City of Winnipeg signing [The Montreal Biodiversity Pledge](#). By signing this Pledge, the City of Winnipeg will indicate its obligation to protect urban biodiversity and implement relevant commitments from the directly related [Global Biodiversity Framework](#).

Biodiversity is fundamental to human well-being, a healthy planet, and economic prosperity for all people, including for living well in balance and in harmony with Mother Earth, we depend on it for food, medicine, energy, clean air and water, security from natural disasters as well as recreation and cultural inspiration, and it supports all systems of life on earth.<sup>1</sup>

At recent meetings at the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) it was acknowledged that cities are major contributors to biodiversity loss, and its City Summit took a leading role in formulating solutions to halt that loss, begin its restoration, and limit the negative impacts cities have on the environment.

As host city, Montreal challenged cities and municipalities around the world to sign the “Montreal Pledge,” which contains 15 minimal actions to protect urban biodiversity and ecosystems. Although the Montreal pledge does not go as far as the Global Biodiversity Framework, it nonetheless serves as an important step forward to move municipalities towards reducing the threat to, and sharing the benefits of biodiversity with their citizens. Within two months of the Montreal COP15 meeting in December 2022, 11 Canadian and 36 international cities signed the Montreal Pledge.<sup>2</sup>

Signing the Pledge will serve to highlight the positive initiatives Winnipeg is already undertaking and will demonstrate the leadership and ambition required to act swiftly and influence other partners, in order to reverse the trend of biodiversity loss and protect our biodiversity. Signing the Pledge will also acknowledge the need for Winnipeg to achieve the targets and goals established by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. There are urban specific targets (e.g. targets 6, 7, 12, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22) that should be incorporated into Winnipeg’s *Master Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan, Biodiversity Policy, Urban Forestry Strategy, Climate Resiliency Strategy, Climate Action Plan, Food Policy, and Integrated Waste Management Strategy*. Given the dire need to act now, those plans, policies and strategies are in need of enhancement and should be addressed in the Winnipeg Council’s upcoming four-year *Strategic Priorities Action Plan*.

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on Biological Diversity CBD/COP15/L.25, Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 18 December 2022, online: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e6d3/cd1d/daf663719a03902a9b116c34/cop-15-l-25-en.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> City of Montreal, “Montréal Pledge: Call for COP15 launched to world’s cities”, online: <https://montreal.ca/en/articles/montreal-pledge-call-cop15-launched-to-worlds-cities-39529>

Signing the Pledge will also indicate the City of Winnipeg's commitment to recognizing the contribution and rights of Indigenous peoples, as stipulated in the Global Biodiversity Framework:

*The framework acknowledges the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity and partners in the conservation, restoration and sustainable use. Its implementation must ensure their rights, knowledge, including traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity, innovations, worldviews, values and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities are respected, documented, preserved with their free, prior and informed consent, including through their full and effective participation in decision-making, in accordance with relevant national legislation, international instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and human rights law. In this regard, nothing in this framework may be construed as diminishing or extinguishing the rights that indigenous peoples currently have or may acquire in the future.<sup>3</sup>*

MbEN believes that by signing the Montreal Pledge, the City of Winnipeg will demonstrate its support for the primary goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework and reinforce the city's commitment to transform Winnipeg into a greener, healthier, more just, and biodiverse city.

We urge you to recommend the City of Winnipeg sign the Montreal Pledge and commit to a more inclusive and sustainable future for our City.

Sincerely,

Glen Koroluk  
Executive Director

Heather Fast  
Policy Advocacy Director

*About the Manitoba Eco-Network:*

Since 1988, MbEN has promoted positive environmental action by supporting people and groups in our community. MbEN's programming focuses on policy advocacy, engagement in consultation processes and developing capacity building tools that benefit the environmental non-profit sector and our member groups. We welcome more opportunities in the future to work with all levels of government in the development of new policies, plans and programs.

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<sup>3</sup> See note 1, page 5, Section C.