

Cross Border Wildfire Review - MACO Concerns to Ministers

November 5,2025  
To: The Honourable Ian Bushie, Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures,  
The Honourable Lisa Naylor, Minister of Transportation,  
The Honourable Mike Moyes, , Minister of Environment and Climate Change

Dear Ministers,  
The following letter was endorsed at the Annual General Meeting of The Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners on November 4,2025. MACO recognizes and acknowledges the concerns of Little Athapapaskow Cottage Association. The LACA were directly affected by this summer’s devastating fires but many other cottage associations were also affected and concerns are great across the province that a similar situation does not repeat itself. Improved communications, both within the province and government agencies as well as interprovincial communications and improved forest management by municipalities, the provincial government and Manitoba Hydro will reduce the risk to property owners throughout the province. We hope that a detailed review of this season’s wildfires will occur so that learnings will improve future wildfire fighting throughout the province.

1. Purpose of This Report

This document outlines the cross-border impacts of the 2025 wildfire season, specifically the fire that originated in Saskatchewan and crossed into Manitoba, becoming part of the Flin Flon fire complex. It is intended for the Manitoba Cottage Association to forward to provincial decision-makers, urging Manitoba’s active participation in Saskatchewan’s wildfire review and the launch of a Manitoba-specific review.

2. Context

The 2025 wildfire began in Saskatchewan before spreading rapidly into Manitoba. Its path affected remote cottage areas, infrastructure, and communities throughout the Flin Flon region, exposing major gaps in emergency communication, response coordination, and evacuation planning — particularly in unorganized northern areas.

Saskatchewan has announced an independent third-party review of its wildfire response. This review, however, would be incomplete without fully representing Manitoba’s experience.

Link to official Saskatchewan announcement: Request for Bids Closed on Independent Review of 2025 Wildfire Season

3. Key Issues Identified

- Manitoba communities were directly impacted by a fire that started in Saskatchewan.
- Cross-border coordination was insufficient, leaving communities vulnerable.
- There was limited communication with residents and remote property owners during critical periods.
- Evacuation protocols and emergency response in unorganized territories were unclear or nonexistent.
- Manitoba currently has no formal review process to document these lessons and make improvements ahead of the 2026 fire season.

4. Recommended Actions

- Engage directly with Saskatchewan’s independent wildfire review to ensure Manitoba’s impacts are formally included.
  - Submit Manitoba-specific input — including fire mapping, emergency response data, and community experiences.
  - Launch a Manitoba wildfire after-action review, focusing on northern and unorganized areas.
  - Develop cross-border wildfire response protocols to ensure seamless coordination in future events.
  - Strengthen emergency communication and evacuation systems for remote cottage communities.
5. Communities and Stakeholders Affected

- Flin Flon and surrounding region
- Remote cottages and lodges on Lake Athapapuskow
- Unorganized territories and provincial parks
- Volunteer networks and FireSmart community initiatives

6. Call to Action

This was not just a Saskatchewan wildfire — this was a Manitoba disaster too. Manitoba must ensure its residents, lands, and communities are represented in the Saskatchewan review and that lessons are documented and acted upon.

- We are calling on Manitoba to:
- Take a public leadership role,
  - Work with Saskatchewan in this review process, and
  - Launch a complementary Manitoba review before the 2026 fire season.

7. Contacts

Little Athapapaskow Cottage Association  
Sherry Trudeau  
sherrylyntrudeau@gmail.com

Cross-Border Wildfire Review Report  
  
Little Athapapaskow Cottage Association  
October 2025

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Sincerely,  
Gordon Campbell,  
President Manitoba Association of Cottage Owners.