



Bill Bowles
The Commissioner of Elections
Province of Manitoba
5 – 165 Kennedy Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1S6

August 22nd, 2025

Commissioner Bowles,

On the evening of August 21st, Wab Kinew and the Manitoba NDP made an announcement about additional infrastructure expenditures, during the byelection in Spruce Woods. This announcement was specifically targeted at the voters of Spruce Woods, and included a specific electoral call to action. The statements in question are transcribed below and the video is attached electronically.

“And now we’re announcing also that stretch from Souris to Deleau is gonna get fixed thanks to our candidate Ray Berthelette.”

“So on August 26th when you choose the road ahead here in Spruce Woods please lend Ray your vote.”

The night before, during a candidates debate, the NDP Candidate, Ray Berthelette, was asked what specific commitments he would make. Mr. Berthelette answered with that specific stretch of road, using almost the exact same language as the Premier. A recording of that debate answer is also attached for your convenience.

To quote from NDP party Secretary Tim Johnson, in a letter he sent your office in a previous complaint - “It is the basic principle of Section 92 that a Government should not be able to use taxpayer money in the midst of an election or byelection to promote its partisan agenda in a way that is meant to influence Manitoba voters” I would have to agree with Mr. Johnson.

Last night, the Premier of Manitoba used his office to make an announcement pertaining to \$115 million in infrastructure investments, for his own partisan agenda, in clear violation of the the *Elections Financing Act*.

Section 92 of the *Elections Financing Act* allows specific exemptions, as government must continue to operate during an election or byelection. None of these apply. The work was not ongoing, and most alarmingly it was specifically targeted at the voters of Spruce Woods. This is an open violation of the letter and intent of the Act.



Section 92 (5) of the act requires the government to adopt guidelines, a copy of this document is also attached for your convenience. In this breakdown, it is incredibly clear, "All announcements should be avoided, unless it relates to important matters of public health or safety. In particular, departments or Crown agencies should not publicly announce policy changes, new programs or funding commitments."

This was a new announcement committing to \$115 million in new infrastructure funding. That number is specific, because in their pre-election spending blitz, the NDP committed that same amount, but noticeably absent from that list is any reference to PTH 2 from Souris to Deleau, this is a new announcement.

The *Elections Financing Act* is specific in its prohibitions. Section 92 (3) spells it out beyond any reasonable doubt that announcements targeted at a byelection are prohibited. In this case that section is applicable, as the announcement in question is a section of road wholly and exclusively within Spruce Woods.

To some, this violation of the Act comes down to the resources used to create and promote this announcement. The accounts it was posted from play a vital role in this determination. The Instagram account in question is a blend of personal and professional. There are multiple digital media staff hired under Orders in Council to create and manage the Premier's digital media. Simply changing the accounts biography to read "Leader of the Manitoba NDP" does not erase the government resources that went into managing and growing that account and the exposure that comes from the work of those professionals.

The Premier has even conducted government business on this account, in September of 2024 an Instagram poll was given equal weight to the official engage.mb platform for determining the design of the new health cards. Government resources are intimately and directly linked to this account.

In 4 days, Manitobans in Westman go to the polls to pick their elected officials. Advance polls are currently open. I would urge you to act on this complaint immediately, as it is certain to have an impact on the electoral race in Spruce Woods.

Thank you,

Obby Khan, MLA
Leader of the Official Opposition