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U.S. anti-Hydro documentary called unfair

By Martin Cash

A movie that is very critical of Manitoba Hydro's past mistakes in northern Manitoba is being released on the eve of a potential historic partnership between Hydro and a northern Manitoba First Nation.

Green Green Water, by St. Paul, Minn. documentary filmmaker Dawn Mikkelson, got its first screenings in the province yesterday.

But concerns and criticism about the

90-minute documentary have been circulating for several months.

Ostensibly a movie about past Hydro mistakes in northern Manitoba, critics say the documentary does not fairly project Hydro's efforts to lessen the environmental impact of the upcoming Wuskwatim generating station. Nor is there enough notice of its efforts to be more responsive and inclusive toward the aboriginal communities of the regions affected by Hydro's projects.

The positive ramifications of a potential equity partnership into which the

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation (NCN) of Nelson House may enter with Hydro to share in Wuskwatim profits is only given short mention, according to a version of the movie viewed late last year.

In a letter to the filmmaker after seeing a rough cut last December, NCN Chief Jerry Primrose said, "We believe this film... is hurtful to our people and offensive to our First Nation."

In an interview yesterday afternoon, Mikkelson said she originally intended to include an item about the impact of Hydro developments on northern aboriginal communities in a larger documentary about global issues.

"But it quickly became clear to me that the story could carry itself," she said. "At the least I thought I could collect some stories and bring them back to the U.S. where people have the impression of Manitoba Hydro as a company that generates green, alternative power. But clearly there are no easy answers or quick fixes."