



2019 AGM Co-President Statement from Tony Morris

Six years.

Six years since the flood.

This is the period of time I've feared the most and hoped we would not see.

Those years after the building of plenty of scar tissue on our memories to heal the wounds we have, in order to carry on, and the time when real tangible, meaningful evidence that this city has grown up enough to protect itself, is finally obvious to all when construction starts on key projects.

I thought we might have 5 years before people really started to trick themselves into thinking maybe what we lived through was a dream or a fluke and that, honestly, that can't happen again, right?

People move on. Survival instincts require us to forget and life layers the tissue. Things don't seem to be happening and I don't hear much about it these days and I think we're all safe enough now and the Government will make good things will happen whenever and it doesn't really matter because I'll have moved out of my house sometime soon and it wasn't that hard after all.

And that's the time when 5 years of real momentum starts to waiver. Elected officials who have been supportive have so many distracting and expensive projects and would love to maybe just slide a little of the budget from this thing that's dragging on and people aren't thinking about or pressing a finger into anyone's chest over, to this other important thing over here that's in the headlines and needs attention. And those distracting things are always there and are always whispering for funding.

Except it will be a lie. A trick of the mind to help us cope. But nothing will have changed. This city will flood again. People will lose property and livelihoods again. People may lose their lives. This city might not ever really recover as a safe place to invest and build businesses and families.

We're in what seems like an interminable period of regulatory review with shifting standards and change of government and opposition from relatively small groups. And upstream, where only real flood protection can happen, not one stone has been turned in six long years.

We're in this dark period where we have to struggle to remember what we all went through in June 2013, as it seems so long ago.

I thought having the white bucket at the entrance tonight might be a neat little trick to help everyone here. One part Elbow river and two parts drywall, I thought it might trigger some memories we'd rather not have, but must hang on to, in order to see this all through.

If you did stick your head in the bucket and caught an odor, hopefully it helped remind you of a place you don't want to be again. For me, I smell failure. Failure by our founders to take the risk seriously enough to develop this city in a different way. Failure by our elected officials at all levels of government and over many, many years to address this city's inherent birth defect through proper mitigation. But mostly, the failure of generations of Calgarians to push them to do so.

This is why, even though we're all so frustrated that what seems so obviously critical to this city, just drags on month after month after month, I remain so hopeful that the largest personal sacrifice that Calgarians have ever paid from flooding, including everyone in this room, along with tens of thousands of others, will have actually meant something.

Because when the Springbank Reservoir is built, as it must be, and when the Bow is properly mitigated, everyone here will have had a hand in that, if we stay engaged and active. We all will have helped this city become the world-class place it aspires to, without the risk it currently faces that so much can be lost to something that can in fact be effectively managed.

I thank each of you for coming here tonight and for demonstrating to Minister McIvor and all three levels of government how important this all is to Calgary's future.

So please allow me to walk you through some high-level information that will be expanded upon by our guest speakers, and through your questions later this evening.