



**Public hearing—Montreal, QC
International Joint Committee, Canadian Section
Proposal for the regulation of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River
July 18, 2013**

Benoît Bouchard: I'll immediately give the floor to Joe Comuzzi, Chairman of the Canadian Section of the International Joint Committee.

Joe Comuzzi: Thank you Commissioner Bouchard....I'm supposed to be chairing this meeting this evening, it's a continuation of the meeting that we had starting at one o'clock this afternoon where we had the technical evidence presented by 4 or 5 very competent, very qualified people with respect to the issue of 2014, the proposal to change the regulation of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario. So this is a continuation and as much as the afternoon session didn't allow for audience participation; this session this evening is since completely for audience participation and then as I'm advised, there are cards that are issued as you come in. If you want to make a presentation you fill out a card and they eventually will bring it up to the table and we will call on you and. We are right about ready to go now.

I'm supposed to be handling this but I'm not gone a handle it because we're in the province of Quebec, and we just happen to have a very fine Quebec Commissioner just appointed two weeks ago and I asked him how would he like to handle the first meeting at an audience participation while we're in Montreal. He completely agreed that he would be the only one that can handle it adequately so I'm going to introduce you to Commissioner Bouchard who I'm very happy to be with this evening and I'm sure after he's through conducting this meeting you'll never want to hear from another commissioner again, except Commissioner Bouchard.

Benoît Bouchard: Thank you very much Joe, merci beaucoup. I'm actually a little happier to be in Montreal tonight because it's very recent—it's only been three weeks as we say back home, and we've been working quickly because, on Sunday, we started a long week of hearings throughout the area affected by Proposal 2014: southwest of Lake Ontario, in fact, Niagara Falls, a bit further north and the United States, where we were until last night. Today, we're in Montreal, tomorrow we're in Cornwall, and we finish tomorrow night. It's been an extraordinary week, hearing many, many people's comments—differing opinions

and concerns from region to region, and carried out superbly. Ms. Pollack was... the person for in the part of the trip, she as a good control of the crowd, she had excellent control over the evenings where it was a little more disorderly, let's say.

All right, so listen, we're going to present a video on the message we're sharing this evening and on the opinions we want to obtain. You know that this issue has existed for a very long time. For some stakeholders, and other people today, this issue has been ongoing for 14 or 15 years. Attempts were made to resolve the infamous St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario problems. Some were simply rejected because we couldn't come to a consensus. Since 2008, a working group has taken a different approach, and there have been many consultations, and this week, we want to see—we're meeting with—what seems to me to be one of the essential parties, that is, the people who are directly involved. This afternoon, we'll meet more people who are personally involved in this case, often by their organization. This evening, those who wish to comment are welcome to. Simply sign up at the back, and we'll give you a chance to speak.

Obviously, as the schedule is relatively tight, each speaker will be given a fairly strict period of three minutes to speak, and the commissioners will likely ask questions if they need further information from you. Again, feel free because what the Commission hears is important, extremely important. For a week now, I've considered myself lucky to have arrived while this is happening. It was a little challenging at the beginning because I'm not fully briefed on this issue, but, with the help of my fellow Canadian and U.S. commissioners, it has gone well. I think we're doing a good job. I think the Commission is definitely listening, and tonight, we won't be commenting on the content or the opinions you express. I'd like to ask for your help, so that everything is done in a...how shall I say...nice way, as things have gone very, very well, but there have been some bumps along the way. For everyone's good, I may have to interrupt the speakers to ask them or tell them that their three minutes is up. At that time, you'll see me raise a ping pong paddle. When it's green, you have one minute remaining. When it's red, it's like everything red—it stops you. With that out of the way, we'll start the video presentation and then proceed with the comments. Thank you. Video, please.

Comment [DR1]: The French says "...c'est un peu ardue au départ **parce que pleinement** le dossier ..." There is something missing. This is my best guess as to what it could be.

(PRESENTATION UNDER WAY)

Benoît Bouchard: Thank you. I slipped up earlier. I forgot something important. I made a mistake; I forgot to ask the Commissioners to introduce themselves.

Gordon Walker: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Gordon Walker, from Toronto. Thank you.

Dereth Glance: Good evening my name is Dereth Glance I'm a U.S. Commissioner, I am from Syracuse New York.

Lana Pollack: Good evening I'm Lana Pollack and I'm a U.S. Commissioner, I live in Michigan. I grew up in the shores of Lake Michigan.

Rich Moy: My name is Rich Moy, I'm a U.S. Commissioner and I welcome you here and I look forward to your comments tonight.

Benoît Bouchard: Thank you Rich. Let's start, and we'll be a little more generous than usual because we don't have a lot of cards. So, we'll give a little more time to each of the speakers to allow them to elaborate if they want. We'll start with Pierre Gingras, please.

Pierre Gingras: Good evening. Thank you for allowing me to speak. In short, I've been involved in power plant dam construction for 47 years as head of planning and costs for the Manic James Bay dams, and today, I still work with the Montreal Economic Institute's Canadian academy of engineers. I'm retired, but I'm still working. So, I still have one question about the water. I've studied over 200 potential dam projects, of all kinds, and many of the dams are now built. I've looked at Plan Bv7, and it seems to me that there's an element missing. According to environmental experts, we can expect the St. Lawrence River inflows to decrease by 20% to 30% over the next 100 years. On its site, Environment Canada says 24%. We clearly can't draw water just to maintain flow; if we do, it won't be for long. We can't let rain water go to waste either. Maybe it's because of my professional background, but I'm used to seeing the management of large hydroelectric complexes divided into different reservoirs, each reservoir managed by its dam. We don't depend on flows to set the water levels. We don't always rely on nature, and I think it would be relatively easy to do the same with the entire St. Lawrence Basin. If we look upstream, Lake Superior is already managed at Sault Ste. Marie. There's no dam in Sarnia, even though one was promised with the first seaway designs. Lake Huron and Lake Michigan are currently over their all time high of two feet. Accelerated flows prove that the sill is eroding. The situation is becoming increasingly critical.

So, there is an initial dam missing at Sarnia. I would ideally place it at the entrance to Lake St. Claire. A little work needs to be done in the Welland, Niagara, region in order to have complete control of Lake Erie. Lake Ontario is very well managed in Cornwall. Lake St. Francis is very well managed by its Beauharnois des Coteaux workers. The big problems start in Quebec. An initial sill about two kilometres downstream of the Mercier Bridge will be required to completely control Lake St. Louis. What is still upstream are the precious rapids, the part that environmentalists are so fond of. We can maybe forget about the La

Comment [DR2]: The French says "Si on le prend depuis Lamont..." I think it is a transcription error for "depuis l'amont." The only Lamont I can find is in Alberta.

Comment [DR3]: The French says "L'accélération des débits..." where I believe it should say "L'accélération des débits..."

Prairie Basin. It doesn't have a single natural shore, and it isn't big. That leaves the part of the St. Lawrence River between Montreal and Quebec City. This is a serious issue because although the river is 2 or 3 kilometres wide, it's usually only 500 metres deep, with the exception of a very localized 12- or 13-metre canal about 600 or 700 metres wide. If we lose 20% of the flows into the river between Montreal and Quebec City, 40% to 50% of the width of the river will easily dry up. From an environmental viewpoint, it's a complete mess. It's horrific. So, a dam at Sorel will be required.

In 1993, the federal government did a lot of studies, and I had access to those data. That dam was just about to be studied, and it was cancelled. We're talking about a 9-foot dam. It's never a question of flooding land. It's always a question of maintaining natural flows and natural historical water levels. We're talking about a fourth dam that would be about a kilometre and a half upstream of Port Neuf, past the elbow where there is an outcrop of rock. For each dam, I made sketches with quantities, construction methods and estimates for about 150 items, including the estimate of 50 at 6.3% financing during construction and the indirect costs of an incidental reserve fund of 20%. We're talking about a dam, four dams in the neighbourhood of \$1.2 to 1.4 billion, all costs included. So, we're talking about a project that would provide complete control over the entire St. Lawrence Basin, regardless of inflows or temperature. Five billion dollars would allow me to draw up to 1,000 m³ for potable water; 1,000 m³/s of potable water equals 400 gallons per day for 200 million people. We could supply the entire Midwest. Five billion dollars also means maintaining water levels on 18,000 kilometres of shoreline. The \$5 billion would also cover maintaining water levels in all the important parts of the Georgian Bay and Lake St. Pierre wetlands. The \$5 billion would guarantee perfect seaway operation for as long as you want, and the \$5 billion would allow 75,000- to 100,000-ton ships to enter the Port of Montreal, a coronary artery. What a lovely gift to the industrial heartland of America.

So, I drafted a report and a few sketches. If it helps the Commission, I have all the technical studies at home and I'm willing to travel to meet with your staff. I have all the estimates, cash flows and labour forecasts I referred to earlier for each site. I'm sorry I have only six copies. I didn't know I would need eight.

Benoît Bouchard: Just give them to Ms. ... Thank you for your comments, Mr. Gingras. They were very helpful.

Pierre Gingras: It's very different. This is the first time it's being examined.

Benoît Bouchard: Thank you. Mr. Pierre Latraverse from the Fédération Québécoise des Chasseurs et Pêcheurs.

Comment [DR4]: The French says "l'effleurement à rocher," but I think they meant "affleurement de roche."

Pierre Latraverse: Good evening. Thank you for having us. We participated in these hearings in Sorel-Tracy in 2007, and I'm back again. I have some comments about Plan 2014.

Benoît Bouchard: Does that mean you still fish?

Pierre Latraverse: Yes, I still fish, but we can talk about that on a more personal note later. I'd also like to advise the commissioners that I've been the Chair of the Lake St. Pierre ZIP committee for 15 years, that I'm the Vice-President of Stratégies Saint-Laurent and that my family has lived in the Lake St. Pierre region since the 1640s.

The Fédération Québécoise des Chasseurs et Pêcheurs is very happy with the main objectives of getting as close to a natural flow as possible. We strongly support this idea and we'd like the same ecosystem criteria that are associated with Lake Ontario and the Upper St. Lawrence to be applied to the Lower St. Lawrence. It's an entire ecosystem, a watershed, and the same criteria should be applied to the whole Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River watershed for the sake of the ecosystem.

However, since the implementation of the regulation of the St. Lawrence waters, for the past 15 years or so, there has been a dichotomy between the delivery and cost of water, which has had an incredible impact on the fauna and flora. You have to mimic natural regulation if you want to adequately ensure that the river's water levels in the spring increase as the ice melts. You currently get rid of the ice early and raise water levels afterwards, which has very serious negative impacts on the ecosystem, as the fish need cold water and high water levels in order to spawn. What's happening now is that water levels are low, the ice goes away, and 15 days, 3 weeks, a month later, the water rises and 3 or 4 metres of water cover the fish eggs laid near the shore and the baby fish all die. This is an issue that needs to be managed on a larger scale.

Let's also talk about the consistency between the regional roundtables established under the St. Lawrence Plan and the Integrated Management Plan of the St. Lawrence. The Integrated Management Plan of the St. Lawrence currently being implemented in Quebec under the St. Lawrence Plan must also be consistent with adaptive management. You ask organizations to work with Quebec's Integrated Management Plan of the St. Lawrence, the federal government's St. Lawrence Plan and the International Joint Commission's adaptive management. So, there are three places where non-profit organizations, such as the hunting and fishing federations and environmental associations, have to go, prepare briefs and work to rehabilitate the river. Adaptive management is a nice idea, but we also have to take into account the fact that the river is a shared asset. The St. Lawrence River is a shared asset that belongs not only to those who navigate its waters and make money but also to all of society and everything that lives and reproduces in it. In our opinion, the concept of the river being a shared asset is not adequately addressed by the International Joint

Commission or Plan 2014. Water belongs to everyone, including the creatures that live and reproduce in it. It's an international obligation. Some 40 million people live around the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, which account for 20% of the world's fresh water. We need the option of a much broader ecosystem vision that takes into account the fact that the river is a shared asset for it to become a vision that Canada and the U.S. adequately support in the way they manage their fresh water, since it represents 20% of the world's fresh water.

Invasive exotic species are also a problem. Currently, the people who live and fish along the river have to resolve this issue. But they aren't the ones who put these invasive exotic species in the river, and since the green paddle is being raised, I would simply like to close by saying that the St. Lawrence River is what gave Canada life. It allowed the white man to arrive in America and develop the Great Lakes and all of America; it provided food for all these people; and it allowed us to live on its shores. Now in 2013, the river is sick. It needs us and it needs passionate people. That's why the adaptive management committee should have representatives—non-governmental organizations—to balance the technical fields because there's human expertise in Quebec. We've been living off this river since 1608, so we know it pretty well. Thank you.

(Applause.)

Benoît Bouchard: Thank you, Mr. Latraverse. Mr. Marc Hudon, Nature Québec.

Marc Hudon: Thanks for this opportunity. Nature Québec representative Marc Hudon. As you said, I represent Nature Québec. I am the Chair of the Saguenay ZIP committee and a proud supporter of Quebec's ZIP program. Nature Québec would like to congratulate the International Joint Commission on holding this public consultation, which keeps the lines of communication open and the public informed. We'd also like to thank you for all the documents you provided on the Plan 2014 proposal and water regulation in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River.

We'd like to remind everyone of a recommendation we made in 2007—to eventually move to regulation that is as close as possible to natural flows—I'm sorry, I hope I'm not reading too quickly for the translator—in order to better protect the entire system against the effects of climate change and overcome the challenge of regulating, in an equal and transparent fashion, the volume of water in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. I'll stick to the essentials, but we'll send you our complete brief in late August. One of the questions I want to address is "Does the new Order of Approval contain evaluation criteria for the objectives that will serve to validate the expected outcomes?" I truly think it does. Among our recommendations, we agree with the use of triggers from Lake Ontario. If we understand their application correctly, they engage sufficiently before problems arise upstream or downstream, so that's good. As with the previous proposals, Nature Québec

Comment [DR5]: The French says "Nature Québec d'abord représente Marc Hudon..." However, it's the other way around. Marc Hudon represents Nature Québec, as indicated in the next sentence.

hopes that the St. Lawrence floodplain will obtain permanent protected status and that this will be taken into account in the adaptive management follow-up. That's particularly important, so as not to undermine the efforts of Plan 2014 to rehabilitate the Lake St. Pierre wetlands.

We support the IJC's proposal to establish a permanent multi-stakeholder advisory committee, which would advise the international board and continually liaise with the basin communities. The federal governments as well as the Ontario, Quebec and New York parties and business sectors must have equal representation. Nature Québec is interested in sitting on this committee if, indeed, it is created. We recommend that the IJC ensure that in the new Plan 2014 governance, the international board of control hold public meetings every three years to inform the public of the Regulation Plan's performance, report on the achievement of objectives and take note of suggestions and concerns. This differs a bit from your proposal in the sense that you hold one at least every 15 years to really re-examine everything. But this would be to reassure everyone and maintain our ties with you. You are an important organization, and we need to see and feel you on the ground. We recommend that the IJC identify and confirm funding sources for ongoing scientific research, monitoring, validation of outcomes relating to the objectives set and adaptive management on the performance of the regulation of the entire Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River system.

My friend Pierre Latraverse told you earlier that we have programs in place to effectively manage...that make a very big.... a good exercise of water governance, including the national water policy with the Integrated Management Plan of the St. Lawrence, which is been put in place as we speak and is going very well. There is under Environment Canada the existing St. Lawrence Action Plan, which addresses the issues we're talking about in protecting the environment. You also have the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, under which the Canada Ontario Agreement exists. Now the Canada Ontario Agreement and the St. Lawrence Plan are two sister outfits from which you could not duplicate but help integrate some of the work and we can contribute to that, so we would be supportive if you....

Nature Québec recommends that the modelling and forecasting work continue in future. We recommend that one adaptive management system be implemented for Lake Ontario and another for the St. Lawrence River. In our eyes, this recommendation is critical when you think about the amplitude and speed of water level fluctuations in the downstream part versus the upstream situation, which is the total opposite. So, as far as adaptive management is concerned, we think that it is more effective and realistic to observe how the plan will be managed with regard to Lake Ontario as a whole and the St. Lawrence as a whole. From there, you can integrate the two, but it really takes separate resources at each debriefing. In closing, I'd like to once more congratulate you and the authorities and

Comment [TB6]: Please verify this.

stakeholders concerned for your dedication and perseverance in adapting the directives and knowledge acquired through Plan 1958D over the last 50 years while developing the Plan 2014 proposal.

In our opinion, the IJC is a role model for its efforts to involve civil society, the scientific community and the government in the development of this proposal. Plan 2014 is a solid compromise that deserves to be implemented carefully with the authorities and needs to be optimized over time in collaboration with the cities and riverside municipalities of the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River system. We strongly encourage you to continue your efforts to inform and involve civil society. Thank you very much.

Benoît Bouchard: Thank you. Mr. Peter White.

Peter White: Madame Chairperson, commissioners: Commissioner Bouchard, Commissioner Walker, Commissioner Comuzzi. First, I apologize for appearing before you without a suit, but at least I have my bow tie. I'm here as a layman but I'm here for I think a good reason, and I'm going to make most of my presentation in English, I'll try to do it quickly.

The gentleman who spoke to you first today, Mr. Pierre Gingras is in my estimation a natural resource of this country. He has had 45 years of experience working for Hydro Québec in planning all of the giant hydro developments that we know in the northern part of this province. He has studied hydrology throughout this country and this continent and other continents for all of that time. He's now retired and lives in the little town of Prévot, north of here, and he doesn't like coming to Montreal so we're lucky to have him here today. I got to know him true the Montreal Economic Institute of Michel Kelly-Gagnon, chaired by Madame Hélène Débarais who is the wife of Paul Débarais Jr.; it's a major institution in Québec. Pierre as been doing work for the Institute for a number of years now, on his own, without any remuneration of any kind. He is the only man that I know who takes a conceptual overview of the management of our water system in this continent.

This may have existed once in Hydro Quebec; it no longer does, the institutional memory has lost, it's seating right there. I don't know if the IJC does this, the IJC's mandate is not the entire continent; it's a smaller peace of the continent but I don't know if anybody takes the conceptual management at heart. So I just wanted to make the point that you're lucky, we are lucky as Canadians to have Mr. Gingras here today and I urge you as the Commission to take full advantage of his knowledge and listen very carefully to his studies and recommendations. He's not an engineer, he is not a formal hydrologist, and he's just a man who's devoted his whole life to the study of these questions, with tremendous results.

Now the second thing I wanted to say is, I learned from Mr. Gingras, to my astonishment that there is no single overarching authority that manages the entire Great Lakes and St.

Lawrence watershed, and that includes the IJC if understand correctly. I've just looked at your maps here; I live in what I concenter to be part of the watershed. I live in Knowlton Quebec on Brome Lake which is part of the Yamaska River witch folds into the St. Lawrence. And my little part in this is I founded the Brome Lake Conservation Association and Renaissance Lac Brome and when I was much younger, the one thing I've actually accomplish in my life is I amalgamated tree municipality around the shore of Brome Lake so the entire Lake could be under a single management, and that's thanks goodness it's working. But we still have divided authorities everywhere. The entire watershed of Brome Lake is not under a single management, just the shoreline, that's not good enough. Now your map 7 here, it shows the Great Lakes St. Lawrence River basins but it stops at Montreal. Your map 8 shows the Lake Champlain basins, but it stops... I don't know it stops at a, I suppose it stops at Sorel, I don't know where, but it doesn't include where the Yamaska comes in, it doesn't include the Lower Saint Lawrence, so if, I can't believe that in this day in age no authorities, not even, I won't even say authority, no minister, no person, no mind, is thinking about the overall management of this huge immense watershed.

As my children would say, this is not only big, this is huge and it's much much bigger than little Brome Lake, and I think it's high time we turn our mind to this issue, let's imagine for once that there are no boundaries, that there are no authorities, that there are governments, there just a huge big watershed, which needs to be managed and first of all conceived. And I'll just finish with the famous word of Rabbi Hillel: If not us who, if not now, when. Thank you very much.

Benoît Bouchard: Thank you Mr. White. Thank you, Peter. It's nice to see you again.

Peter White: It's a pleasure. Thank you, Commissioner.

Benoît Bouchard: Ok...I don't have any other speakers on my list. So, thank you for being here. It was an excellent day in Montreal, and we're leaving here with your comments and thoughts and hoping that we'll be able to incorporate everything we've received in the last five days, which will finally allow us, we believe, in Plan 2014—now we believe even more, as we have sought the opinions of the public and stakeholders, who pointed out the importance of consulting citizens in general. I've just started with the Commission and I think this is one of the elements that made me realize how important people's opinions are to us. This is so true that, in 2008, the proposed plan was rejected, but it was seen by outside stakeholders and abandoned. This means that your preferences and your opinions are important. At the same time I would like to thank my colleagues Commissioners, I'm always pleased to be back in Quebec, in Montreal. But I think that you have a good picture of the commitment of people in this province and I'm sure that what has been expressed tonight will be there in your reflection about the future that we have to give to, that

wonderful I mean eco-system which is formed by the Great Lakes of St. Lawrence River.
Yes, Mr. Hugo.

Mr. Hugo: Thank you for giving me a few more minutes. I just wanted to emphasize that the plan you are proposing is a plan for improving the environment.

You want to address the environment in a major way. I'm a bit concerned, although I respect what the colleagues who support them construction have presented, I respect their viewpoint. I just want to say that, a bit like at one time in the past, there was a major voice made to enlarge the Seaway. There are things that we need to do before we go to such extremes in terms of ensuring that our water is controlled across the system, and I know you are aware of it but because I'm here. I feel important to mention it. I don't disregard the notions of the ultimate tools that we may have to use eventually because water is disappearing from the system, it may come to that one day, but I sure hope that every jurisdiction, every industry including Hydro Quebec and engineers and whatever we come with better solutions to maximize the water column that we have and to protect the water intakes for human consumption. We only see traces of the impacts of climate fluctuation right now and it's affecting the cities major ways, just with canicule like we have in Montreal this days, it's very hard.

So I'm just saying let's hope that all the science that we have behind the IJC and the other institutions of the Great Lakes, we come to work together to find a softer approach to managing the water of this body. Forty million people above upstream from us, that's you know.... I went all across the Great Lakes, I don't think there's a corner I don't know and I don't respect and everybody wants to take care of the water. We have big challenges in front of us with people asking for that water so we certainly need a strong IJC leading these discussions under what pertains to your mandate of course. But for God sake, let's take the soft approach to management to protect our resource. Thank you and I apologize for disrupting your ending Monsieur Bouchard.

(Applause.)

Benoît Bouchard: No problem. Thank you again. À la prochaine and see you next time.

End of transcript