



Saskatchewan Irrigation Projects Association

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INFO:	<i>Chair Gray</i>
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	<i>me/mv/J.S.</i>
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FILE / DOSSIER	
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August 29, 2004

Mr. Herb Gray
Chair, Canadian Section
The International Joint Commission
234 Laurier Avenue West, 22nd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario
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CANADA

Mr. Dennis Schornack
Chairman, United States Section
The International Joint Commission
1250 23rd Street NW, Suite 100
Washington, D.C.
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USA

Dear Sirs:

RE: Request by the Governor of Montana to Review the 1921 Apportionment Order for the St. Mary River and Milk River

Our association was officially formed in 1996 to represents the irrigators in the province of Saskatchewan and to provide a common voice for issues concerning irrigators.

Thank you for holding the public information and fact gathering meetings in Montana, Saskatchewan and Alberta the last week of July. Our director, Ron Tittle attended the Eastend meeting that was both insightful and informational.

Our association would like to take this opportunity to provide further information regarding our reasoning why we believe that there is no advantage to opening the 1921 Apportionment Order.

In Saskatchewan most of the major water ways are shared with the neighbouring provinces, territories and states. We have grown to appreciate the long standing agreements that have been put in place. Our water infrastructure has been designed and is operated in accordance with this agreement. The continued compliance with the agreement is necessary to continue our management practices that the agricultural industry relies on to make their investment sustainable.

There has been irrigation in the southwest of Saskatchewan for over 100 years and it has been developed on the bases of the agreement. The Eastern Tributaries of the Milk River including the Battle and Lodge Creeks and the Frenchman River are included in the 1921 Order of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers. Significant dollars has been invested in infrastructure that has been designed and is operated as an integral part of their operations for water supply for their livestock and for irrigation. The local agricultural economy

relies on and operates in accordance to the apportionment. There is 48,000 acres of irrigation and 400 – 500 ranches that are in this catch basin.

Also, there are many communities and a recreation site that depend on the existing system. The management of the river, creeks and water systems is critical to the wildlife and wetland habitat in the region. The community's quality of life and environment are directly affected by how the water is managed. This management is vital to the environmental and economic well being of the region.

Alberta has investing heavily in the necessary infrastructure to enhance their economy. In Saskatchewan we have significant investment in the infrastructure. We are currently partnering in a study of water in Saskatchewan. The study's mandate is to review the utilization of existing infrastructure and to develop a plan for further development in Saskatchewan over the next 50 years to enhance our economy and better utilize our water resource. The plan will be unveiled November 4.

With the 50 year strategy we will have a plan in place to further develop an efficient water industry utilizing good stewardship of our water resource. We believe that with initiatives such as this all interested stakeholders have the opportunity to further develop and modernize their water interests to utilize their allocation under the 1921 apportionment agreement.

With good communications and cooperation, important and critical water management issues can be resolved far more effectively. We believe that there is potential to improve the water management for all users with administrative changes that could proceed within the framework of the 1921 agreement. It is important to have the local autonomies directly involved in the administrative operations. The local management can react to changing conditions so that any under or over deliveries can be correctly quickly.

We appreciate you undertaking the process of the public meetings in the United States and Canada and the consultation approach to the request from the Governor of Montana. The 1921 Apportionment Order was put in place after much discussion and it has been the basis for the development of water resources in southern Alberta and southwest Saskatchewan. Allocations made prior to the 1921 Order of the IJC were taken into consideration when the order was signed and since then considerable investment has been made under the guidelines of the 1921 Apportionment. Therefore we believe that the 1921 Apportionment Order should remain in effect as is.

Thank you for allowing us to participate in this consultation process. Good communications under the 1921 Apportionment Order is the key to continued development.

Yours truly,



Roger Pederson

Chairman