



United States Department of State

Washington, D. C. 20520

September 22, 2016

Mr. Chuck Lawson
Secretary, U.S. Section
International Joint Commission
2000 L St. NW, Suite 615
Washington, D.C. 20440

Lake Champlain and Richelieu River Reference

Dear Mr. Lawson:

The governments of Canada and the United States thank the International Joint Commission (IJC) for the December 2015 report (“A Real-Time Flood Forecasting and Flood Inundation Mapping System for the Lake Champlain-Richelieu River Watershed”) and accompanying static inundation maps. This work, which partially fulfills two components of the 2013 Plan of Study (“The Identification of Measures to Mitigate Flooding and the Impacts of Flooding of Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River”), has greatly advanced our understanding of the watershed and its vulnerability to flooding.

As you recall, the governments requested this work via a July 2014 communication that also noted that “subject to each government’s national appropriations process, Canada and the United States may consider a subsequent reference on other components of the 2013 Plan of Study, including using data from this work”.

The governments are now in a position to issue this subsequent reference. In accordance with Article IX of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, the governments request that the IJC complete the work outlined in Option B of the 2013 Plan of Study to more fully explore the causes, impacts, risks, and solutions to flooding in the Lake Champlain-Richelieu River basin.

This work outlined in Option B comprises:

1. Evaluating the causes and impacts of past floods, especially the event of 2011.
2. Assessing the possibilities offered by the floodplain best management practices.
3. Evaluating possible adaptation strategies to the expected future variability in the water supplies.
4. Developing and making recommendations for implementing, as appropriate, an operational, real-time flood forecasting and flood inundation mapping system for the Lake Champlain-Richelieu River watershed.
5. Conducting an in-depth study of current social and political perception on structural and other mitigation measures to support and confirm the desirability of potential structural mitigation solutions.
6. Performing a quantitative and qualitative assessment of potential flood management and mitigation measures (non-structural and/or moderate structural works) and their impacts on important resources of the system: the wetland and fauna, recreational, domestic, industrial and municipal uses of water, shoreline and floodplain built environment and agriculture.
7. Developing resource response models that include basic indicators for water resources response to water levels fluctuations, with special attention on the data inventory and identification of thresholds. Climatic projections, wind wave and ice models, additional new data for the evolution of watershed physiographic characteristics over time and a complete digital terrain model should also be produced to allow the planning, evaluation and ranking of potential flood mitigation solutions, using a shared-vision approach.

The governments request that the Commission complete these activities within five years, making full use of the technical data collected and models prepared to date. The IJC should also prepare an initial workplan within six months of the date of this letter, as well as interim briefings at each semi-annual IJC meeting. The final report should be submitted by the end of 2021.

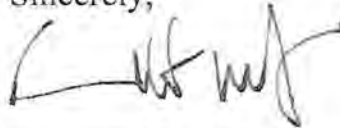
In support of the new work outlined above, the Government of Canada has committed \$7 072 950 CAD over five years, or \$1 414 590 CAD per fiscal year. The Government of the United States has already committed \$1,000,000 USD and is seeking additional funds. Consistent with the reference letter of July 31, 2014, the United States and Canada underscore their joint commitment to the principle of parity, including with respect to funding under the Boundary Waters Treaty, and

share the understanding that ultimate funding of this reference and references related to this matter will, in cumulative total, be funded by the two governments, subject to national appropriations, on a basis of parity.

The governments of Canada and the United States welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the Commission on this work. Further, we very much value the contribution of the governments of Québec, Vermont and New York, and count on their continued cooperation as we further assess flooding and mitigation measures in the Lake Champlain-Richelieu River watershed.

An identical letter is being sent from Global Affairs Canada to the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kenneth Merten', written in a cursive style.

Kenneth Merten
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Western Hemisphere
Affairs
United States Department of State