

## **Progress Reports on 5-Year Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Water Level Study Released to International Joint Commission**

**OTTAWA, August 14, 2002** - The International Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Study Board and the Public Interest Advisory Group (PIAG) announced today the public release of [two comprehensive progress reports to the International Joint Commission](#) (IJC). The reports summarize activities completed in the first year of a 5-year, bi-national water level study of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. "We are very pleased to report on the significant amount of work that took place over the first 16 months of the Study", said Doug Cuthbert, Canadian Co-Director of the International Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Study Board. "Each member of the Study Team has been working to lay the foundation for a successful evaluation of water level regulation in the system."

The PIAG Year 1 report was developed to ensure that the public's impressions, opinions and feedback were accurately captured from the very beginning of the Study. The Public Interest Advisory Group will continue to liaise between the study team and the public, carrying forward public concerns about water level regulation in the basin and in turn providing the public with the latest information regarding the study.

"The Commission is very pleased to receive the reports presented by the Study Team and we look forward to reviewing them in detail," said Mr. Herb Gray, Chairman of the Canadian Section of the International Joint Commission. "The Commission has been following the work of the Study closely as they set out collecting data and reaching out to those who are impacted by Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River regulation.", added Mr. Dennis Schornack, Chairman of the U.S. Section of the IJC in Washington, D.C.

The Study Team emphasizes that there is a great deal of work ahead to complete the 5-year project and that public participation is critical to the evaluation and assessment of current water level regulation in the basin. To ensure that the study reflects the interests of the public, the PIAG will continue to schedule frequent public meetings in various locations in the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River area. Upcoming meetings will be held in Ogdensburg, New York, Belleville, Ontario and Trois-Rivières, Quebec.

The International Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Study was set in motion in 2000 by the International Joint Commission to assess and evaluate the Commission's Order of Approval used to regulate outflows from Lake Ontario through the St. Lawrence River. The current Order of Approval requires that the St. Lawrence Seaway Power Project be operated to meet certain conditions and criteria to protect the interests in both countries, including shoreline communities, commercial navigation and Hydroelectric Power production. The Study is also evaluating the impacts of changing water levels on environmental factors, shore erosion, flood damages, recreational boating, and tourism. The 22-member PIAG is a group of U.S. and Canadian volunteers working to ensure effective two-way communication between the public and the study team.