

## **PIAG Terms of Reference**

The Public Interest Advisory Group is responsible for providing public involvement guidance, consultation and assistance to the International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study Board, and to periodically report to the International Joint Commission on its activities, findings and recommendations.

As part of this responsibility, the PIAG will:

- Provide a public liaison function to the Study Board through Public Interest Advisory Group co-chairs who serve as members of the Study Board;
- Advise the Study Board on the responsiveness of the study process to public concerns;
- Advise the Study Board on public consultation, involvement and information exchange;
- Serve as a conduit for public input to the study process, and for public dissemination of study outcomes;
- Serve as liaison to and participate in the activities of Technical Work Groups as Public Interest Advisory Group members desire.

The Public Interest Advisory Group, in consultation with the Study Board, will work with grass-roots organizations and interests throughout the study area and conduct public participation activities at strategic points in the study to:

- Identify and utilize local expertise and information;
- Consult with the publics on critical or potentially controversial study findings before these study components have been finalized by the Study Board;
- Disseminate plain language information to enhance public understanding of the causes of problems related to fluctuating water levels and of the consequences of proposed solutions;
- Identify and consider priorities and preferences of the publics as alternatives are defined;
- Consult with the publics on Study Board findings, conclusions and recommendations prior to their adoption by the Study Board.

Public Interest Advisory Group meetings shall be held at different locations throughout the study area to encourage public consultation and shall be announced in advance. Use of both French and English will be normal practice for meetings held in the Canadian area of the study. Opportunities for public observers to attend the meetings shall also be announced in advance, although the Public Interest Advisory Group may conduct its business in executive session, when necessary.

Public Interest Advisory Group members are encouraged to participate in the activities of the Study Committees/Teams.

The Public Interest Advisory Group shall consult with the Study Board, and the Study Staff public affairs personnel to coordinate all public involvement activities under the study. Overall coordination shall be the responsibility of the Study Board. Coordination with the public outreach activities of the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control, the Cornwall and Massena Remedial Action Plans and the Lakewide Management Plan is encouraged to avoid confusion and to better inform the publics.

The Public Interest Advisory Group shall meet approximately four times per year.

- Members will receive support for their travel to Public Interest Advisory Group meetings, but will not be compensated for their time.
- Secretariat support functions, such as distributing documents\agendas, organizing meetings and taking minutes will be provided to the Public Interest Advisory Group by Study public affairs personnel.

PIAG members are selected by the International Joint Commission for renewable, 18- month appointments based in large part on the following considerations:

- Ability to serve the greater public interest and work effectively in group settings that include diverse user groups.
- Knowledge of one or more user groups of the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River system and understanding of how they are impacted by levels and flows;
- Possession of an active network of contacts in Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River system user groups and willingness to foster two-way communications between system users and the study team;
- Availability to attend a minimum of four Public Interest Advisory Group meetings per year, read key study documents and participate in other aspects of the study process. (Alternate members may be designated to attend additional meetings on the member's behalf.)

Terms of PIAG members may be renewed with the mutual agreement of the member and the IJC.