



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

March 19, 2012

Mr. Chuck Lawson
International Joint Commission
2000 L Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20440

Dear Mr. Lawson:

The Governments of Canada and the United States, at the request of the Province of Quebec and the State of Vermont, are writing to the International Joint Commission concerning flooding in Lake Champlain and its tributaries, and the Richelieu River. In the spring of 2011, devastating floods in the area caused serious material damages, and resulted in adverse environmental and agricultural impacts on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border.

The Governments of Canada and the United States are investigating a reference to the International Joint Commission to study flooding in these areas and request that the Commission first develop a plan of study, a timetable, and a proposed budget necessary to complete this work. The plan of study should include:

1. An evaluation of the causes and impacts of flooding in the Lake Champlain watershed, with emphasis on the events of 2011;
2. An evaluation, including a cost-benefit analysis of flood mitigation solutions for Lake Champlain and its tributaries and the Richelieu River, considering both structural and non-structural solutions;
3. Analysis and recommendations for adapting to the variability of water supplies to the Lake Champlain and Richelieu River watershed, building upon existing relevant studies. This includes, but is not limited to, work produced by the Lake Champlain Basin Program, the University of Vermont, and the Ouranos Consortium on regional climatology and adaptation to climate change;
4. An analysis of existing, country-wide flood plain regulation best management practices, to include recommendations for community-based regulation; and,

5. An evaluation of the need for real-time flood inundation mapping to help predict flooding potential and prepare local communities and emergency responders for future floods.

The Governments of Canada and the United States welcome the opportunity to collaborate and assist the Commission in its work. A request corresponding to this letter is being sent to the Secretary of the Canadian Section of the Commission by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Jacobson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Roberta S. Jacobson
Acting Assistant Secretary
Western Hemisphere Affairs