

**INTERNATIONAL LAKE ONTARIO - ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BOARD**  
**Board Meeting 29 March 2018 – 8:00 am to 3:00 pm**  
**Embassy Suites Hotel Buffalo/Downtown – Salon Meeting Room**  
**200 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo NY 14202**

United States		Canada
	Board Members	
Mr. S. Durrett, Alt. Chair Mr. R. Company (ph) Mr. A. David Dr. F. Sciremammano		Dr. G. Béchard, Chair Mr. J. Aubry-Morin Ms. P. Clavet (ph.) Mr. M. Hudon Ms. J. Frain
	Secretaries	
Mr. A. Heer		Mr. R. Caldwell
	Regulation Representatives	
LTC Adam Czekanski Mr. K. Koralewski (Alt.)		Mr. J. Bruxer (ph) Ms. J. Dickhout (Alt.)
	IJC Staff	
Mr. D. Hermann		Mr. D. Fay
	Associates	
Ms. C. Fisher Mr. J. Scharf Ms. L. Schifferle Mr. B. Carmichael Mr. G. Schmidt		Ms. W. Leger Mr. M. Shantz

**1 Welcome and introductions**

The US Chair, Mr. Stephen Durrett, opened the meeting at 8:00 am (EDT) with a roll-call and introductory remarks. The meeting only consisted of Board members, Secretaries, and IJC advisors until 10:00am to discuss process potential process improvements on how the Board responds during extreme events. The remainder of the attendees joined the meeting at 10:15 am,

13 at the start of the Current Conditions and Regulation Overview. Upon his arrival, LTC  
14 Czekanski announced he will be departing from the USACE Buffalo District and will be  
15 replaced by LTC Jason Toth moving forward.

## 16 **2 Overview of Questionnaire and Responses**

17 The Board was distributed a questionnaire to give them an opportunity to identify strengths and  
18 areas that may require improvement when making regulatory decisions under extreme  
19 conditions, and communicating to the public, stakeholders, and government officials.

## 20 **3 Discuss Member Concerns and Identify Solutions**

21 Board members discussed many topics including:

- 22 • Develop a map or list of key stakeholders to communicate with during times of crisis to  
23 enable better understanding of “on-the-ground” conditions throughout the basin.
- 24 • Daily briefings provided by the Canadian regulation representatives were essential for  
25 Board members to communicate information when approached by the public, media,  
26 government officials or others.
- 27 • The Regulation Representatives should compile a listing of URLs where members can  
28 also obtain daily updated information.
- 29 • The Regulation Representatives should re-circulate an updated Operations Advisory  
30 Group information package to members.
- 31 • Conference calls regarding outflow decisions should be limited to Board members and  
32 direct supporting staff
- 33 • Communication with external audiences is essential, especially when deviation authority  
34 is limited.
- 35 • Board needs further and continued education from Regulation Representatives about how  
36 the regulation plan operates including plan flow, rule curve, limits, etc.
- 37 • Establish a location for emergency in-person meetings during extreme events to facilitate  
38 better communication.
- 39 • Secretaries to schedule full-day semi-annual board meetings to provide more time for  
40 discussion and planning
- 41 • An overview or “101” of how to interpret regulation products such as the weekly  
42 regulation sheet will assist newer board members in independently seeking out  
43 information.

- 44 • During extreme events, the Board should be careful not to impose on existing agency  
45 structures that deal with emergency response. The Board should not venture into a local  
46 agency's area of responsibility.
- 47 • The Board would like to gain a better understanding what the St. Lawrence Seaway  
48 means to the economy of NY State and other geographic regions to assist with decision  
49 making.
- 50 • The Board needs to be conscious that when deviating from the regulation plan they may  
51 be encroaching on external agencies' approval of the plan.
- 52 • In general, enhanced information regarding tradeoffs when making outflow decision  
53 would be beneficial
- 54 • Board would like clarification of Article VIII of the Boundary Waters Treaty from the  
55 IJC to better understand what actions are possible under major deviation authority
- 56 • In future decisions, some Board members may need to remove themselves from decision  
57 making if a conflict of interest or deviations in opinions may exist. Information to make  
58 decisions may need to come from advisory groups rather than members.
- 59 • Additional agency resources may be needed during extreme events to assist with  
60 organizing meetings and information to ensure Board members are prepared
- 61 • Board acknowledged outward communication needs to be unified and ensure messages  
62 are not contradicting, confusing or diluting other messages.
- 63 • During emergency calls, Board should state the purpose and objective of the meeting to  
64 ensure time is used effectively.
- 65 • During emergency calls, Board members should be prepared so information does not  
66 have to be redundantly communicated from one call to the next. This will speed up  
67 discussions and save the Regulation Representatives considerable time.

68

69 **Action item:** Secretaries and Regulation Representatives will evaluate the Board's  
70 comments and prepare solutions to be discussed with Board members at  
71 future meetings.  
72

73 The minutes of the 24 October meeting were approved.

#### 74 **4 Current Conditions and Regulation Overview**

75 The US Alternative Regulation Representative presented on hydrologic conditions, including

76 above-average water levels in the upper Great Lakes, as well as conditions in the Lake Ontario –  
77 St. Lawrence River system. He then presented an updated forecast of water levels of Lake Ontario  
78 to the end of the year indicating the low risk of water levels reaching the Criterion H14 high or low  
79 thresholds under very wet or dry basin conditions. He also noted Plan 2104 continues to prescribe  
80 very high outflows in response to the high upper Great Lakes water levels, and the last 52 weeks of  
81 water supplies. Due to the start of navigation season on March 29<sup>th</sup>, outflows are currently being  
82 maximized in accordance with Plan 2014’s L-limit, which specifies the maximum flow possible  
83 while considering safe navigation conditions in the St. Lawrence River.  
84 The Canadian Regulation Representative noted that the September to March period was the second  
85 wettest since regulation began in 1960.

## 86 **5 Gauging Committee Update**

87 The Gauging Committee distributed the 79<sup>th</sup> (2015) and 80<sup>th</sup> (2016) inspection reports for the  
88 Board’s review and approval. The 81<sup>st</sup> (2017) report is still in progress and will be distributed to  
89 the Board for approval once complete. The committee is scheduled to perform the 2018 gauge  
90 inspection from 11-17 June.

91 The committee also discussed the need for the Power Entities to complete a precision survey  
92 (especially at OPG’s Saunders generating station due to swelling of concrete near critical gauge  
93 stations located at the dam). The survey is required every 10 years, and should be performed in  
94 2018.

95

96 **Action item:** Secretaries will re-distribute the 79<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> Gauging Committee reports  
97 for the Board’s review. The Board will aim to approve the reports at  
98 their April meeting.

99 **Action item:** Power Entities to update the Board on the status of the scope of work for  
100 the precision survey at the April meeting.

## 101 **6 Communication Committee Update**

### 102 **a. IWI Proposal for Communications Assessment**

103 The Board discussed the IWI proposal which the Secretaries and IJC staff had prepared to hire a  
104 communications professional to assess the effectiveness of the Board’s communication with the  
105 public and stakeholders. The IWI funding was approved by the IJC, and a scope of work was

106 developed so it may be sent out for a request for proposals. The contracting is being handled on  
107 the Canadian side, but the product will assess communication efforts in the US and Canada.

108 **b. Recent/ Upcoming Public Meetings**

109 The Board discussed their attendance to numerous public meetings in both the US and Canada to  
110 explain the high water levels of 2017 were driven by extreme rainfall throughout the basin, the  
111 limitation of any water regulation plan has in controlling extreme water levels, and answer any  
112 questions proposed by local government officials, the public, and other interested entities The  
113 Board will continue to attend meetings as requested by stakeholders and government officials to  
114 the best of their ability given their limited resources to carry out such communication.

115 **c. Facebook Communication Challenges**

116 The Board discussed recent challenges in managing their Facebook page. The extreme water  
117 levels of 2017 lead to a large increase in public participation which presented many issues such as  
118 dealing with inappropriate comments or “trolling”, providing timely responses to large volumes or  
119 inquiries which, at times, may require detailed technical information, and ensuring a professional  
120 tone is used when communicating and that responses represent the view of all Board members.  
121 The Board will continue to discuss options for handling communication including reducing the  
122 frequency of responding to comments, and explore means of obtaining a dedicated media  
123 professional to manage Facebook and other public communication.

124

125 **Action item:** Co-Chairs to explore if agency resources are available to support the  
126 Board’s communication efforts.

127 **7 GLAM Report Discussion**

128 The GLAM Committee Canadian Co-Chair presented the outline and draft content of the GLAM  
129 Committee’s draft Annual Report for 2017. It was explained the 2017 report is the first report of  
130 many the GLAM will produce every year. The report will document the hydrologic conditions,  
131 regulation activities, hydroclimate, impacts/benefits to the six major interests, and a review of  
132 regulation plan performance. Due to the extreme conditions in the Lake Ontario –St. Lawrence  
133 River system, the GLAM 2017 report will contain a “Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River Annex”  
134 which will provide more detailed information on the outline topics.

135 The preliminary draft was submitted to the Boards for their initial review. Preliminary impact

136 assessment and plan performance data was presented and discussed. It was emphasized the  
137 report is not intended to provide an economic assessment of damages that occurred, rather it will  
138 document physical impacts in relation to the performance indicators that were used to develop  
139 the plan. The GLAM explained they are assessing impacts using different methods such as  
140 assessing aerial imagery that was collected during the high water, gathering impact information  
141 by speaking with representatives from the St. Lawrence Seaway corporations, the Power Entities,  
142 and state or provincial government agencies. The complete report is expected to be submitted to  
143 the IJC for approval in October 2018, but the IJC is considering an early release of chapters of  
144 the report that describe the hydrologic conditions and regulation activities that occurred during  
145 2017.

146 The GLAM Co-Chair also presented a draft Circles of Influence strategy to the Board, which  
147 will act as a way for the GLAM to collect and share information, and collaborate with key  
148 representatives from each of the 6 major interest groups throughout the entire Great Lakes basin.  
149 The GLAM Committee is in the process of creating this strategy and developing the key points  
150 of contact.

151

152 **Action item:** Board members are to provide comments to the GLAM on Sections 2-5  
153 by April 13<sup>th</sup> and the preliminary impact assessment and plan review  
154 sections by May 5<sup>th</sup>..

## 155 **8 Other Business**

156 **a. ILOSLRB Meeting** – April 24<sup>th</sup>, Washington DC

157 **b. IJC Reception** – April 24<sup>th</sup>, Washington DC

158 **c. IJC Appearances** – April 25<sup>th</sup>, Washington DC

159 **d. GLAM Meeting** – June 26-27, Detroit MI

160 **e. ILOSLRB Meeting** – September 18, Cornwall ON

161 **f. Flow Verification** – Regulation representatives and secretary discussed the need for  
162 flow verification measurements downstream of the Long Sault dam.

## 163 **9 Action Item Review**

164 • Secretaries and Regulation Representatives will evaluate the Board's comments and  
165 prepare solutions to be discussed with Board members at future meetings.

166  
167 • Secretaries will re-distribute the 79<sup>th</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> Gauging Committee reports for the Board's  
168 review. The Board will aim to approve the reports at their April meeting  
169

- 170       • Secretaries will draft a letter to the Power Entities to request the status of the scope of work  
171           for the precision survey.  
172
- 173       • Co-Chairs to explore if agency resources are available to support the Board’s  
174           communication efforts.  
175
- 176       • Board members are to provide comments to the GLAM on Sections 2-5 by April 13th  
177           and on the preliminary impact assessment and plan review sections by May 5<sup>th</sup>.

178   **10       Closing Remarks and Adjournment**

179   The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

180

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185

186 **FINAL AGENDA**

- 187
- 188 1. Roll, Opening Remarks, Objectives, Code of Conduct [Durrett, Bechard] 8:00 am
- 189
- 190 2. Overview of Questionnaire and Responses [Caldwell, Heer] 8:20 am
- 191 a) Discuss Areas Needing Improvement
- 192
- 193 3. Discuss Member Concerns and Identify Solutions 8:45 am
- 194
- 195 **15 min BREAK 10:00 am**
- 196
- 197 4. Current Conditions and Regulation Overview [Koralewski] 10:15 am
- 198
- 199 5. Gaging Committee Update [Koralewski, Fisher, McNiven] 10:45 am
- 200
- 201 6. Communication Committee Update [T. David, Company, Hudon, Heer] 11:15 am
- 202 a) IWI Communication Proposal
- 203 b) Recent/Upcoming Public Meetings
- 204 c) Facebook Communication Challenges
- 205
- 206 **LUNCH 12:30 pm**
- 207
- 208 7. GLAM Report Discussion [Heer, Leger] 1:30 pm
- 209 a) Preliminary Draft Annual Report for 2017
- 210 b) Circles of Influence
- 211
- 212 8. Other Business [Heer] 2:50 pm
- 213 a) ILOSLRB Meeting: April 24 1-5pm (Hampton Inn, 1729 H St. NW, Washington DC
- 214 20006)
- 215 b) IJC Reception: April 24 6pm (2201 C St, NW, Washington DC – DOS Exhibit Hall)
- 216 c) IJC Appearance: Washington DC – April 25
- 217 d) GLAM Meeting June: Detroit, MI TBD
- 218 e) Flow verification at Long Sault Dam
- 219
- 220 9. Action Item Review [Heer] 2:55 pm
- 221
- 222 10. Closing Remarks [Durrett] 3:00 pm
- 223
- 224