

**INTERNATIONAL  
RED RIVER BOARD**

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**CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL  
DE LA RIVIERE ROUGE**

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Daniel Marx  
Flaherty & Hood, P.A.  
525 Park Street Suite 470  
St. Paul, MN 55103

Re: Peer review of the 2016 RESPEC report on the development of a stressor response model for the Red River of the North

Dear Mr. Marx,

As the representative of the cities of Breckenridge, Moorhead, Thief River Falls, Roseau and Warroad, you made a presentation at the International Red River Board's (Board) 2018 summer meeting. Thank you again for your presentation. In that presentation you raised several concerns about the subject report, and concluded by requesting a peer review of the report. As you know, the Board supported the request for the peer review and subsequently worked through the International Joint Commission to contract with two independent peer reviewers.

A copy of the report provided by the independent peer reviewers is included for your information. As you will see, the reviewers were asked to consider the questions that you raised at the 2018 Board meeting as well as additional questions about the adequacy of the methods and analysis used in development of the report.

Overall, the reviewers found that the study was adequately designed and conducted and the analytical methods used were appropriate. The reviewers determined that the "nutrient targets suggested were within a range of reasonable numbers that could be derived from the data" and they re-analyzed the data to check the results with a simple independent approach and came up with similar numbers." As such, the Board intends to include the RESPEC analysis and recommendations as a key part of our work to develop nutrient objectives and targets for the Red River at the US/Canada border.

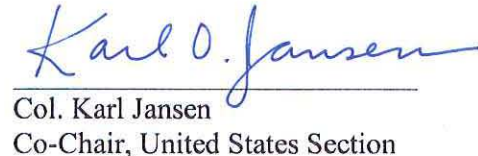
The reviewers had a number of suggestions intended to strengthen the RESPEC study. The Board has carefully considered these suggestions in the context of the application of the study to the Board's work to develop nutrient objectives and targets. The Board and its Water Quality Committee appreciate the suggestions made by the reviewers and will consider how this additional work (including addition of new data sets) could be accommodated as the objectives and targets are refined and updated in the future.

Perhaps of most interest to the Board is the reviewer's observation that the targets may not be stringent enough to protect the aquatic ecosystem health of the river and Lake Winnipeg. The Board recognizes the concern and agrees that it is a legitimate question. The Board also recognizes that meeting the proposed objectives and targets will take years of work all across the basin and that there will be time to re-evaluate the objectives and targets in the future. In particular, the Board notes that its September 2011 document (<https://legacyfiles.ijc.org/publications/Approach%20for%20a%20Nutrient%20Management%20Strategy%20for%20the%20Red%20River%20Watershed.September%202007,%202011.pdf>) describing the approach to developing the nutrient objectives/targets for the Red River includes a commitment to "adapt the nutrient management strategy based on progress and ongoing evaluation". The Board remains committed to an adaptive management approach to reducing nutrient loading in the Red River Basin and expects that the comments and suggestions in the peer review will help to inform future work in this area.

Thank you again for your presentation in August 2018 and for your strong interest in the work of the International Red River Board. If you have any questions about the review or the Board's next steps, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

  
Mike Renouf  
Co-Chair, Canadian Section

  
Col. Karl Jansen  
Co-Chair, United States Section

cc. Jim Ziegler and Nicole Armstrong, Co-Chairs, Water Quality Committee