

**MINUTES**  
**INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION**  
*Executive Meeting*

**Virtual Meeting**

*December 7 and 8, 2020*

The International Joint Commission met in a virtual Executive Session on December 7, 2020, from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm EST and December 8, 2020, from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm EST with Jane Corwin in the Chair.

**COMMISSIONERS**

Jane Corwin	Chair, U.S. Section
Pierre Beland	Chair, Canadian Section
Henry Lickers	Commissioner, Canadian Section
Merrell-Ann Phare	Commissioner, Canadian Section
Rob Sisson	Commissioner, U.S. Section
Lance Yohe	Commissioner, U.S. Section

**SECTION OFFICES**

Chuck Lawson	Secretary, U.S. Section
Camille Mageau	Secretary, Canadian Section
Paul Allen	Manager, Policy and Communications, Canadian Section
Norman Barth	Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Section
Frank Bevacqua	Public Information Officer, U.S. Section
Kevin Bunch	Writer-Communications Specialist, U.S. Section
Pierre-Yves Caux	Director, Science and Engineering, Canadian Section
Rachel Carmichael Campbell	Student Analyst, Canadian Section
Mark Colosimo	Engineering Advisor, U.S. Section
Susan Daniel	Legal Advisor, U.S. Section
Antionette Dunston	Special Assistant, U.S. Section
David Fay	Senior Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section
Mark Gabriel	Engineering Advisor, U.S. Section
Adam Greeley	AAAS Fellow, U.S. Section
Nick Heisler	Policy Advisor, Canadian Section
Rachel Horoschak	Administrative Assistant, U.S. Section
Wayne Jenkinson	Senior Engineer Advisor, Canadian Section
Jeff Kart	Executive Editor, IJC Newsletters, U.S. Section
Erika Klyszejko	Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section
Jeff Laberge	Information Management Analyst, Canadian Section

Tristan Lecompte	Environmental Officer, Canadian Section
Catherine Lee-Johnston	Environmental Officer, Canadian Section
Mark Leiva	Network Specialist, U.S. Section
Sarah Lobrichon	Public Affairs Advisor, Canadian Section
Brian Maloney	Special Assistant, U.S. Section
Diane Moczula	Junior Policy Advisor, Canadian Section
Robert Phillips	Senior Water Quality and Ecosystem Adviser, Canadian Section
Isabelle Reid	Executive Assistant, Canadian Section
Victor Serveiss	Environmental Advisor, U.S. Section
Carole Smith	Senior Advisor, Canadian Section
Ed Virden	Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Section
John Yee	Chief, IM and IT Services, Canadian Section
Shane Zurbrigg	Legal Advisor, Canadian Section

**GREAT LAKES REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF**

David Burden	Director
Antonette Arvai	Physical Scientist
Raj Bejankiwar	Physical Scientist
Jennifer Boehme	Physical Scientist
Mark Burrows	Physical Scientist
Matthew Child	Physical Scientist
Diane Varosky	Administrative Coordinator
Allison Voglesong-Zejnati	Communications Advisor
Li Wang	Physical Scientist
John Wilson	Physical Scientist

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

1. Commissioners approved the agenda with the addition of several items.

**EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES**

2. Commissioners approved the minutes of the October 16 and 19-23, 2020, Semi-annual Executive and Board appearances sessions.

**OUTSTANDING CORRESPONDENCE**

3. Commissioners reviewed the list of outstanding and recently received government correspondence and approved the new reporting format, including identification of letters to governments for which a six-month reminder might be warranted.

**ACTION ITEM LIST, COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES LIST, AND COORDINATED CALENDAR**

4. Commissioners reviewed the IJC Action Item List, requested the addition of a few events to the coordinated calendar, and were provided with additional social media analytics including the mapping details.

**2021 SCHEDULE OF IJC MEETING**

5. Commissioners reviewed and approved the schedule of IJC Executive and Semi-Annual meetings for 2021, noting that some dates might need slight adjustments. Commissioners agreed that it is likely virtual meetings will continue for the time being. Commissioners also agreed that key national indigenous days be added to the list of domestic holidays on which the Commission will seek, to the extent possible, to avoid scheduling executive meetings.

**IJC GEOSPATIAL STRATEGY**

6. Commissioners received an update on the geospatial strategy and progress made in meeting the 5-year geospatial plan objectives, including current and upcoming challenges. They discussed possible ways forward and requested that the Geospatial team prepare an analysis of and possible options to improve support for the key GIS needs of the Commission and its boards. Commissioners will examine potential resource commitments and partnerships with other agencies as they consider next steps.

**GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY AGREEMENT**

**7. A. 2023 TRIENNIAL ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS REPORT**

Commissioners approved next steps for developing the structure and objectives for the 2023 Triennial Assessment of Progress report, including scheduling discussions with the Co-Chairs of the Water Quality Board ; Co-Chairs of the Great Lakes Science Advisory Board; and Co-Chairs of the Great Lakes Executive Committee in the new year.

**B. GREAT LAKES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Commissioners reviewed preparations for the December 9-10, 2020, meeting of the Great Lakes Executive Meeting and agreed on the Commission's key messages regarding the TAP 2020 highlights and on the Commission's GLEC observer comments.

**GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE RIVER**

**8. A. GREAT LAKES-ST LAWRENCE RIVER CONDITIONS AND FORECAST**

Commissioners received an update on conditions in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin and noted that Lake Ontario water levels currently are just slightly above average for this time of year.

**B. CYBER BULLYING AND ONLINE CRITICISM OF ILOSLRB STAFF**

Commissioners received information on actions taken to date to address, report and prevent further cyberbullying and social media harassment of ILOSRB staff and considered additional actions that could be taken by the IJC, and where appropriate in collaboration with other government agencies, to shelter staff, board members and partners. Recognizing differences in domestic standards and protocols, Commissioners committed to working with ECCC, USACE and other partners to develop collaborative and complementary approaches to address this issue. Actions to be taken by the Commission include increased communication support dedicated to the Great Lakes control boards to maintain and further the relationship with the public. The Commission, in partnership with the appropriate agencies, will obtain expert advice on how best to support IJC board members and staff and provide training to deal with online criticism.

**C. ILOSLRB REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF WINTER REGULATION STRATEGY**

Commissioners approved the Board's winter regulation strategy. As conditions permit, beginning on January 1, 2021, and continuing through the end of February, the Board will increase outflows from the Moses-Saunders dam to evaluate minor temporary modifications to flows under Condition J of the Commission's Order to determine whether such modifications are advisable. The Board will keep the Commission updated on the progress of their winter regulation strategy and will reassess in February to determine if conditions at that time, including conditions on Lake Erie and the upper Great Lakes, warrant further use of such modifications this spring.

**GAO REPORT FOLLOW UP**

9. Commissioners received an update on follow up actions taken by the IJC to address recommendations in the GAO report and approved the draft letter updating the GAO on those actions.

## **GREAT LAKES ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

10. Commissioners received an update on the GLAM Committee's expedited review of the performance of Plan 2014, including the Public Advisory Group's activities and the PAG's outreach efforts. Commissioners also received an update on GLAM membership, current and upcoming vacancies. Commissioners discussed the effectiveness of the IJC Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation and the Canadian St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation, designed to facilitate the exchange of information between the GLAM Committee for the expedited review of Plan 2014. Commissioners agreed that it would be appropriate to have a meeting with the Seaway Corporations in the coming months to review the MOA and explore ways to improve information sharing between the Seaway and the Commission.

## **INTERNATIONAL WATERSHEDS INITIATIVE**

11. Commissioners received an update on IWI activities and provided feedback on efforts to advance the designation of pilot watershed boards as full watershed boards. Commissioners and advisors discussed the scheduling of another intersessional meeting with Governments on the designation of watershed boards. Commissioners agreed to hold a meeting with advisors on December 18<sup>th</sup> to formulate next steps on the issue. Commissioners reviewed plans to disseminate information more broadly on the 5<sup>th</sup> IWI Report to Governments, which will be released in December 2020.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **12. A. Proposed meeting with Shoal Lake #40 First Nation**

Commissioners received an update on efforts to arrange a meeting requested by Shoal Lake #40 First Nation, to which the lead Commissioners for the Rainy-Lake of the Woods basin and IJC advisors will participate. Although staff have already made contact with the First Nation, a letter formally responding to the Chief's meeting request will be circulated to Commissioners for approval by polling.

### **B. Correspondence with the City of Winnipeg on the 1914 Order of Approval (Shoal Lake)**

Commissioners were advised that a response to their letter of October 29, 2020 to the City of Winnipeg -- regarding the 1914 Order of Approval to divert water from Shoal Lake and Lake of the Woods -- was still pending. Commissioners endorsed staff plans to follow up and observed that it would be important to maintain momentum on this endeavor.

### **B. IM IT Migration update**

Commissioners received an update on the status of the migration of Commissioners and

staff to the new IM/IT system. Advisors noted that training sessions would be held in December 2020, prior to the January 2021 migration.

**C. Assembly of First Nations (AFN) annual meeting**

Commissioners received a briefing on the feedback generated by the IJC's presentation during the AFN annual meeting, including numerous inquiries on how participants and their organizations could work with the Commission on issues of common interest. Commissioners discussed the need to develop a relationship with traditional governments and agreed to pursue the discussion in the context of the Commission's Indigenous Strategy.

**D. Protecting Canada's Large Lakes**

Commissioners approved a letter to the Government of Canada urging the government to maintain its commitment to increase protection to large lakes. The letter outlines, based on the IJC's transboundary experience, what those protections should entail and the importance of a freshwater agenda to the social, economic and cultural wellbeing of citizens from both countries living and working in large transboundary watersheds.

**E. International Red River Board**

Commissioners discussed the need to broaden the membership of the IRRB to include indigenous members, as their knowledge and experience in the watershed would be of great interest to the Board. Commissioners instructed advisors to draft a letter informing the board that the Commission places a high priority on increasing diversity on the board and inviting it to work with IJC board liaisons to identify potential indigenous members. Commissioners anticipate that potential members will be identified prior to the Spring 2021 Semi-Annual meeting.

**F. Expedited Review of Plan 2014**

Commissioners reviewed plans for French and English language public listening sessions, which are intended to raise awareness of the expedited review of Plan 2014 and invite comment on the scope of issues that the GLAM Committee is assessing during Phase 1 of the review. Commissioners directed communications staff to provide additional contextual information on the role of the listening sessions within the overall communications strategy for the expedited review.

**G. St. John River Madawaska-Edmundston International Bridge**

Commissioners received an update of the State of Maine's plan for replacing the Madawaska-Edmundston International Bridge and noted that the U.S. State Department and Global Affairs Canada determined that any impacts to water levels and flows during or following construction of the new bridge structure would be negligible. The governments therefore concluded that there is no need for an Application to the IJC under the Boundary Waters Treaty.

**H. Souris River Study**

Commissioners received an update on the September 2020 indigenous workshop report, noting that it would be submitted for approval at the December 11 Study Board meeting.

The Study Board then plans to consult with the International Souris River Board on a number of the workshop recommendations. The workshop report and recommendations will be transmitted to the commission before end of study, likely mid-March 2021.

## **DECISIONS TAKEN VIA POLLING**

### **International Lake Superior Board of Control**

On December 4, 2020, Commissioners approved the Board's request to deviate from Plan 2012 flows during the month of December 2020 due to an unexpected outage for repairs at the Evolgen (Canadian) hydropower plant. Commissioners also approved a letter to the Board confirming the Commission's approval of the deviation request.

### **International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board**

On November 30, 2020, Commissioners approved the reappointment of Mr. Tom Brown as a U.S. member of the Board for a three-year term, effective from May 31, 2020, to April 30, 2023.

### **International Niagara Board of Control**

On November 27, 2020, Commissioners approved a temporary Supplementary Order allowing for the installation of the Lake Erie-Niagara River ice boom as early as November 30, 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Commissioners also approved a letter to the New York Power Authority transmitting the approval of its request.

### **International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board**

On November 24, 2020, Commissioners approved the reappointment of Ms. Joan Frain as a Canadian member of the Board for a three-year term, effective from December 1, 2020, to November 30, 2023.

### **International Souris River Board**

On November 10, 2020, Commissioners approved the reappointment of Ms. Nicole Armstrong as the Canadian Co-Chair of the Board for a three-year term, effective from November 1, 2020, to October 31, 2023, and the reappointment of Mr. Russell Boals as a Canadian member of the Board for a two-year term, effective from November 1, 2020, to October 31, 2022.

### **Accredited Officers of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers**

On November 2, 2020, Commissioners approved a letter to the governments forwarding a summary provided by the Accredited Officers of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers on the 2020 St. Mary and Milk Rivers apportionment season and the recent repairs made to the St. Mary Canal.

### **International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board**

On October 29, 2020, Commissioners approved a letter to New York Governor Andrew Cuomo requesting nominations for a position on the board.

### **Shoal Lake**

On October 27, 2020, Commissioners approved a letter to the City of Winnipeg requesting information of the city's use of water from Shoal Lake.



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Camille Mageau  
Secretary  
Canadian Section



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Susan Daniel  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Section