

**MINUTES**  
**INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION**

*Executive Meeting*

*January 26 and 28, 2021*

The International Joint Commission met in a virtual Executive Session on January 26, 2021, from 10:00 am to 17:17:30 pm EST and January 28, 2021, from 10:00 am to 16:30 pm EST with Pierre Beland in the Chair.

**COMMISSIONERS**

Jane Corwin	Chair, U.S. Section
Pierre Béland	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**

Susan Daniel	Acting 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	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
Cory Olishansky	Legal 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

### **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 Other Business items.

### **EXECUTIVE MEETING MINUTES**

2. Commissioners approved the minutes of the December 7 and 8, 2020 Executive meeting,

### **OUTSTANDING CORRESPONDENCE**

3. Commissioners reviewed the list of outstanding and recently received government correspondence and requested that the correspondence related to the IRRB watershed board request be listed; that governments be reminded of their outstanding response to

the Lac Memphremagog, Missisquoi Bay study reports and that additional efforts be made to secure meeting with the city of Winnipeg regarding the Shoal lake Order. Commissioners will be seeking a meeting with the responsible Canadian federal ministers to discuss how the IJC might help governments coordinate their respective efforts to enhance resiliency in transboundary areas.

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

4. Commissioners reviewed the IJC Action Item List and requested the addition of files for which continued IJC actions will be required, requested the addition of a few events to the coordinated calendar and the communications calendar, and requested that a meeting be set up with governments to discuss moving forward and funding the St Mary Milk Rivers Study Proposal submitted by the Accredited Office. The suggestion that a more balanced approach to profiling the Commission's and board's current achievements with those of significant past, achievements in future newsletters was met with approval.

#### **IM/IT**

5. Commissioners received an update on the migration of IJC email to the new platform and were briefed on the next steps. IM/IT staff will continue to communicate best practices and provide tutorials on how to maximize IJC Commissioner and staff use of the new system.

#### **INFORMAL MEETING WITH GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**

6. Commissioners reviewed the draft agenda for the proposed mid-March informal discussion with Global Affairs Canada and the U.S. Department of State meeting and requested several revisions.

#### **GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY AGREEMENT**

##### **7. A. 2020 TRIENNIAL ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS REPORT**

Commissioners received a debrief on the roll out of the 2020 TAP report, of the engagement strategy and requested that elected officials in the Lake Superior basin be provided with additional information regarding the TAP recommendation about government leadership to eliminate Lake Superior blue-green algal blooms.

## **B. 2023 TRIENNIAL ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS REPORT**

Following up on discussions with the WQB co-chairs, Commissioners agreed to the establishment of a working group, comprised of the co-chairs of the Great Lakes Advisory Boards, subject matter experts as required and WQB Co-Chairs acting as lead. This working group is to develop an assessment framework identifying the data, information and resources needed as well proposed work plans and timelines to meet the requirements of Article 7(k) of the GLWQA. The Working Group is also to identify those aspects of the Assessment which could be completed in time for the TAP 2023 report and to provide recommendations on a more appropriate time frame to conduct a comprehensive assessment for future discussion with governments. A proposal for the development of the draft assessment Framework will be submitted to Commissioners for consideration at the Spring Semi-annual meeting.

## **C. GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY PROJECTS**

Commissioners received information on WQB, SAB, and HPAB work plans with some projects well aligned with the recommendations of the TAP 2020 report. As the TAP 2023 Assessment Framework evolves the development of GL Advisory Board work plans for 2022 and beyond will be better aligned and integrated to the new approach. .

## **D. GREAT LAKES CENTENNIAL WATER QUALITY STUDY**

Commissioners discussed the Great Lakes Centennial Water Quality Study project of the Health Professional Advisory Board and look forward to discussing it during a webinar to be scheduled at a later date to discuss possible next steps.

### **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 had declined in January due to high outflows and low precipitation.

### **B. ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY CORPORATIONS**

Commissioners requested that a meeting be set in mid-February with the Seaway Corporations' leadership and Governments to exchange information on water level conditions, potential flow regulation actions this spring and the Seaway's considerations in planning their opening date and to explore ways to improve information sharing between the Seaway and the Commission.

### **C. CYBER BULLYING AND ONLINE CRITICISM OF ILOSLRB STAFF**

Commissioners received information on actions taken to date and were briefed on additional items that could be taken by the IJC to address the cyber bullying issue. The discussion focused on the need to obtain expert advice on the approach the Commission should adopt and identified the need for an overarching IJC harassment and cyberbullying policy, and for clearer guidance on IJC and Board roles, responsibilities, and protocols on how to respond to difficult communications.

### **D. GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE RIVER COMMUNICATIONS**

Commissioners reviewed communication objectives and plans for 2021 including the provision of additional opportunities for the Commission to hear from stakeholders and for stakeholders to hear from each other. Commissioners discussed the importance of enhanced collaborative efforts to address coastal resilience throughout the Great Lakes' Basin and of the IJC's potential role in supporting governments' efforts to that effect. Commissioners requested staff prepare, for the Spring semi-annual, a Paper on Coastal Resiliency and Climate Adaptation summarizing ongoing basin-wide initiatives and provide advice on a potential value added IJC role.

### **INTERNATIONAL LAKE SUPERIOR BOARD OF CONTROL**

9. Commissioners received an update on Evolugen's report on the Gate 1 closure including an overview of the Fish Salvage operation which indicates that because of the slow rate of the gate closure that there was not significant damage caused to the fish population.

### **GREAT LAKES ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

10. Commissioners received an update on the GLAM Committee's expedited review of the performance of Plan 2014 and noting the resignation of one of the members of the Public Advisory Group, discussed the advisability of introducing a new member at this time in the process. Commissioners are to solicit the views of the PAG at their upcoming meeting and to discuss the matter with the GLAM co-chairs. Commissioners were also briefed on the practice decision workshops held with the PAG and with Board afterwards.

## **INTERNATIONAL WATERSHEDS INITIATIVE**

11. Commissioners were provided with a presentation of the IWI projects data base which has been designed to streamline the management of IWI data and reports, with the intent to eventually make these publicly available and provide a search registry and data visualization dashboard for ease of access. Commissioners agreed to participate in regional webinars for the IWI 5<sup>th</sup> report to Government and requested that staff engage with governments at the intersessional information meeting regarding the outstanding question of the watershed designation for the Red and the Souris River boards following which the Commission would take action.

## **INDIGENOUS PEOPLES ENGAGEMENT**

12. **A. TOWARD INDIGENOUS MEMBERSHIP ON THE IRRB and ISRB.**  
Commissioners received an oral update on the proposed next steps towards inviting Indigenous members to join the IRRB and the board's proposed outreach and engagement strategy undertook to assist the board in identifying potential candidates. The lead Commissioners will lead the recruitment effort and work with the Board to draw up a short list for consideration by the Commission. The board is being asked to focus on its outreach and engagement strategy and to report on the progress achieved at April semi-annual meeting.

### **B. INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Commissioners received an update on other planned activities aimed at fostering Indigenous engagement and participation in the work of the Commission including the Indigenous Traditional Knowledge workshop scheduled for the second week in April and an Indigenous Awareness training potentially to be held in March.

## **COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACCH SUPPORT TO BOARDS**

13. This item was deferred until a later date.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. NEW YORK VS IJC LITIGATION UPDATE**

Commissioners were provided with a status update.

### **B. YUKON MINING**

Commissioners were informed of a collaborative effort among the Government of the Yukon Territory, mining industry, and Indigenous peoples to explore potential sustainable development options. Commissioners are to further explore whether they

should express interest in being informed on the initiative.

**C. IJC MELCC MEETING**

Commissioners were debriefed on a January 27, 2020 meeting held with senior officials from the Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques to which staff from both US and Canadian Sections attended and co-chaired by Chair Béland and Deputy Minister Croteau.

**D. MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
CORRESPONDANCE**

Commissioners requested preparation of a letter acknowledging receipt of the incoming December 31, 2020 letter from the State of Montana.

**DECISIONS TAKEN VIA POLLING**

**IJC-Restore our Waters International**

On January 28, 2021, Commissioners approved the letter to the Restore our Waters International responding to their incoming Dec 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020 letter concerning high water levels on lakes Michigan, Huron, and Georgian Bay. In its response, the Commission highlights the fact that the Coordinating Committee on Great Lakes Basic Hydraulic and Hydrologic Data is separate from the IJC, and as such the minutes of their meetings are not under the control of the IJC.

**International Red River Board and International Souris board**

On January 18, 2021, Commissioners approved letters to the IRRB and ISRB calling on them to broaden their respective membership to include Indigenous members and to report their progress at the Spring Semi-annual, 2021.

**International Souris River Study Board**

On January 12 2021, Commissioners approved IJC's letter to the ISRSB transmitting the Governments' December 21, 2020 response to the Study board's request for an extension and additional funding to complete the Study.

**International St. Croix River Watershed Board**

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Commissioners approved the re-appointment of Mr. Sean Ledwin as a U.S. member for a three-year term effective from October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2023.

**International Souris River Board**

On December 18, 2020, Commissioners approved the appointment of Mr. David Ashley to be a US public member for a three-year term, effective from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023.

**International Watersheds Initiative**

On December 17, 2020, Commissioners approved sending the English version of the 5th IWI Report to Governments and a shortened French version of the report to governments and approved a letter transmitting the report to governments. Commissioners also provided advisors

with their availability for webinars in January and February 2021 to promote the release of the report.

**Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Adaptive Management Committee**

On December 16, 2020, Commissioners approved the reappointments of: Ms. Wendy Leger as the Canadian Co-Chair of the Committee; Messieurs Robert Caldwell, Jacob Bruxer, Frank Seglenieks, and Jonathan Staples as Canadian members of the Committee; and Mr. Keith Koralewski as a U.S. member of the Committee, each for a three-year term, effective from January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2023.

**Shoal Lake**

On December 14, 2020, Commissioners approved: having a virtual meeting with Shoal Lake #40 First Nation Chief Vernon Redsky, as requested by the Chief; a letter to the Chief acknowledging and accepting his invitation and requesting any available information on the First Nation's work with Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and with Professor Aimée Craft; and have Commission staff reach out to ECCC colleagues to enquire about their recent work relating to water levels.



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Camille Mageau  
Secretary  
Canadian Section



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Susan Daniel  
Acting Secretary  
U.S. Section