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Minister of the Environment

Ministre de l'Environnement

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H3

DEC 04 2002

The Right Honourable Herb Gray, P.C., Q.C.
Chair, Canadian Section
International Joint Commission
234 Laurier Avenue West, 22nd Floor
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| IJC / CMI OTTAWA | |
| ACTION: | <i>A. Mackenzie</i> |
| INFO: | <i>Chau Gray, Commo.</i> |
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*Board + Blaney
J. Mallory
A. Krantzberg*

Dear Mr. Gray: *Herb*

Thank you for your letter of September 12, with which you enclosed a copy of the International Joint Commission's (IJC) Eleventh Biennial Report on Great Lakes Water Quality.

The Government of Canada welcomes the Commission's recommendations on action for improving the health, prosperity, and sustainability of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. We appreciate the Commission's work in monitoring and reporting on the progress of governments under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA).

As you point out, the 1972 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement was a visionary statement between two countries that has helped to guide the governments in their efforts to clean up and protect the Great Lakes. The Government of Canada is committed to meeting its obligations under the GLWQA and to ensuring that the Agreement continues to be a visionary statement.

Through the combined actions of all government jurisdictions, the private sector, community groups and individuals, progress has been made in cleaning up and restoring Canadian Areas of Concerns. It was my pleasure to be at the IJC's semi-annual meeting on October 10, when the Severn Sound Area of Concern was formally de-listed by the Commission.

However, we recognize that more needs to be done and the Government of Canada remains committed to the restoration of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. As part of that commitment, earlier this year we signed, with the Province of Ontario, a new Canada-Ontario Agreement that implements our five-year action plan for making progress in cleaning up the Great Lakes.



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Canada

The Government of Canada recognizes that alien invasive species continue to pose a threat to the biological integrity of the Great Lakes. As part of the Government of Canada's actions to address this threat, my department is working hard to co-ordinate the development of a national plan on alien invasive species. This plan, which will include the provinces and territories, will provide a national response that prevents, eradicates and controls alien invasive species and helps to ensure that we protect the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem and its biodiversity.

The Commission's observations and recommendations on ecosystem health indicators are welcomed. Ecosystem health indicators are important tools for determining trends in environmental quality and for making informed policy decisions. We will continue to develop appropriate indicators and indices for the Great Lakes and to support these with the necessary monitoring programs.

I have instructed my officials to carefully review the recommendations contained in the Commission's Eleventh Biennial Report and to consider how best to integrate them into our existing action plans for the Great Lakes Basin. It is my hope that the Government of Canada will be able to provide a formal response on those recommendations to the Commission early in 2003.

Once again, thank you and your fellow commissioners for your work in helping to ensure that progress is made in improving the health, prosperity, and sustainability of the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

Yours sincerely,



David Anderson, P.C., M.P.

Your help on this
issue is, as always,
invaluable

