

INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION

Canadian Section Office

234 Laurier Avenue West, 22nd Floor

Ottawa, Ontario

February 2024 Executive Meeting Minutes – February 13, 2024

The International Joint Commission (IJC) met in Executive Session (virtually) on Tuesday, February 13, 2024, from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM EST, with Merrell-Ann Phare in the Chair.

COMMISSIONERS

Merrell-Ann Phare, Chair, Canadian Section

Sue Chiblow, Canadian Section

Gerald Acker, Chair, US Section

Robert Sisson, US Section

Lance Yohe, US Section

SECTION OFFICES

Susan Daniel, Secretary, U.S. Section

Christopher Wilkie, Secretary, Canadian Section

Paul Allen, Manager, Policy, Programs and Communications

Glenn Benoy, Director, Sciences and Engineering, Canadian Section

Mark Colosimo, Director Science and Engineering, U.S. Section

John Allis, Engineering Advisor, U.S. Section

Rob Caldwell, Senior Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section

Kevin Bunch, Writer-Communications Specialist, U.S. Section (contractor)

Christina Chiasson, Policy & Communications Advisor, Canadian Section

Celine Desjardins, Project Officer, Canadian Section

Oliver Dumville, Senior Policy Advisor, Canadian Section

Antionette Dunston, Special Assistant, U.S. Section

Alexandria Farrell, Environmental Officer, Canadian Section

David Fay, Senior Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section

Mark Gabriel, Engineering Advisor, U.S. Section

Kathey-Lee Galvin, Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Section

Adam Greeley, Science Advisor, U.S. Section

Shenice Gross, Network Administrator, U.S. Section (contractor)

David Hermann, Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Section

Jeff Kart, Executive Editor, IJC Newsletters, U.S. Section (contractor)

Erika Klyszejko, Engineering Advisor, Canadian Section

Jeff Laberge, Information Management Analyst, Canadian Section

Michael Laitta, Senior Physical Science Adviser/GIS Coordinator, U.S. Section

Catherine Lee-Johnston, Environmental Advisor, Canadian Section

Sarah Lobrichon, Public Affairs Manager, Canadian Section

Brian Maloney, Special Assistant, U.S. Section

Reginald McClendon, Executive Administrative Assistant, U.S. Section

Semra Mesulam, Legal Advisor, U.S. Section

Diana Moczula, Junior Policy Advisor, Canadian Section

Christian Moreau, IT Support Analyst, Canadian Section
Isabelle Reid, Executive Assistant, Canadian Section
Lyne Sabourin, Senior Water Quality and Ecosystem Advisor, Canadian Section
Mounir Salmi, Accounting Assistant, U.S. Section
Avni Solanki, AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow, U.S. Section
Derek Spelay, Administrative Assistant, Canadian Section
Yon Trimble, Public Affairs Specialist, U.S. Section
Ed Virden, Senior Policy Advisor, Public Affairs, U.S. Section
Jo Werba, AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow, U.S. Section
John Yee, Chief, IM and IT Services, Canadian Section
Shane Zurbrigg, Legal Advisor, Canadian Section

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF

Heather Stirratt, Director
Antonette Arvai, Physical Scientist
Raj Bejankiwar, Physical Scientist
Mark Burrows, Physical Scientist
Matthew Child, Physical Scientist
Kenneth Getty, Administrative Officer
Monique Myre, Administrative Officer
Rajendra Poudel, Economist
Laura Sabra, Administrative Officer
Sandra Svoboda, Communications Officer
Diane Varosky, Administrative Coordinator
Allison Voglesong Zejnati, Public Affairs Specialist
Lizhu Wang, Biological Scientist
John Wilson, Physical Scientist
Rachel Wyatt, Communications Officer

1. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Commission welcomed new Canadian Commissioner, Sue Chiblow. Commissioners approved the agenda for the February 2024 Executive Meeting with the addition of one item under Other Business, the discussion of a Commission retreat to discuss priorities.

2. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioners approved the minutes of the December 2023 executive meeting in Washington, DC. Commissioners requested that staff provide draft minutes for review within two weeks of executive meetings to allow Commissioners an opportunity to provide a timely review and approval of the minutes. Commissioners requested fewer oral updates in the future, and that more lengthy updates be provided in writing instead.

3. A. 2024 SCHEDULE OF IJC MEETINGS

The Spring Semi-Annual will be in Washington, D.C. April 8-12, 2024. The July 2024 Executive Meeting will be in the Great Lakes Region, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, on July 8-9, 2024. The Executive Meeting on September 4-5, 2024, will be hybrid and the location will be determined at a later date. The Fall Semi-Annual Meeting will be in Ottawa, on October 21-25, 2024. The Executive Meeting on December 11-12, 2024, will be hybrid in Washington, D.C. Commissioners requested that staff explore opportunities to have quarterly in-person Executive Meetings, in other words, have an in-person executive meeting between the Commission's in-person Spring and Fall semi-annual meetings (between April and October), and between the Fall and Spring semi-annual meetings (between October and April each year). Staff noted the Commission's July 2024 Executive Meeting is scheduled to be an in-person meeting. Commissioners also asked staff to look for opportunities to schedule the Commission's in-person executive meetings in alignment with board meetings taking place in the transboundary watersheds in which they work.

B. SPRING SEMI-ANNUAL OVERALL AND BOARD APPEARANCE AGENDAS

Commissioners approved the proposed agenda for the Spring 2024 Semi-annual meetings in Washington, DC. Commissioners directed staff to provide guidance to Boards in advance of semi-annual appearances indicating what the Commission expects to receive in terms of informational updates and points of discussion with the Boards. Commissioners reinforced the need for adequate time during Board appearances for questions and discussion with the Boards.

4. SYNTHESIS OF PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE 2020-2022 CANADA-U.S. AIR QUALITY AGREEMENT PROGRESS REPORT

Staff presented a draft transmittal letter to governments synthesizing comments received on the Air Quality Agreement Progress Report and provided an update on governments' review of the Agreement. As in past years, the Commission received very few public comments on the report. Commissioners reviewed and provided feedback on a draft transmittal letter to governments. Staff will revise the letter per Commissioner feedback and resubmit it to Commissioners for approval within the coming weeks.

5. 2023 IJC ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT

Commissioners approved the IJC's 2023 Annual Activities Report. The report is available in English and in French. Staff are preparing to deliver hard copies of the report to Governments at the Spring Semi-annual meetings. Staff are also preparing a distribution list for the report to be shared with Commissioners for their review.

6. INTERNATIONAL WATERSHED INITIATIVE

Staff discussed the international watershed board scoping activities with Commissioners. The IJC held scoping meetings with local communities and organizations in the Osoyoos Lake basin to assess the interest in potentially forming an international watershed board in that basin. Commissioners approved the commencement of a feasibility study for the evolution of the International Lake Osoyoos Board of Control into a watershed board. Staff will provide further details on the feasibility study at the April Executive Meeting including continued consultation with governments. Commissioners requested further conversations with staff regarding the international watershed board designation process and recommended a meeting with staff take place during Great Lakes Week (week of March 4).

Staff discussed the need to provide a template for annual reports and workplans to our international watershed boards. Commissioners requested to review the current watershed board workplans and annual reports to identify whether there is a need for IJC staff to provide more guidance to Boards on these documents.

Commissioners approved the summary of the October 2023 IWI workshop to post on the IJC website. Commissioners approved the digital distribution of the IWI in the 21st Century Report reprint, including to all transboundary basins.

7. POPLAR AND BIG MUDDY BASINS

Staff provided an update to Commissioners on the current status of efforts to establish the International Poplar River and Big Muddy Creek Task Force. Staff continue to conduct outreach with relevant organizations in the basin to discuss participation on the Task Force. It was noted that a letter was sent to the Saskatchewan Water Security Agency leadership seeking their participation. Commissioners and staff will continue to have discussions with prospective member organizations on the formation of this group.

8. INTERNATIONAL SOURIS RIVER BOARD UPDATE

Staff provided an update to Commissioners on upcoming Board events, including a Board meeting scheduled for Feb 27th and the Board's annual public meeting on Feb 26th. Lead Commissioners on this file indicated their willingness to attend the Board and public meetings, where possible. Staff provided an update on the inaugural meeting of the Indigenous Advisory Committee on February 6th and 7th, which was carried out successfully. A summary of this meeting will be shared during the Board's meeting on February 27th. The ISRIB co-chairs attended the Souris River Basin Water Management Agencies meeting in Minot from February 5-9th and liaisons will receive an update from those meetings on February 22nd.

9. INTERNATIONAL RAINY-LAKE OF THE WOODS WATERSHED BOARD

Staff presented several updates on International Rainy-Lake of The Woods Watershed Board (IRLWWB) activities, including updates on projects, communications activities, and upcoming events. Commissioners continued to discuss Grand Council Treaty #3's (GCT#3) request for one of their members to be nominated to the Water Levels Committee (WLC), with further questions around the structure of the WLC. They requested further discussion with liaisons before deciding on next steps.

10. INDIGENOUS COLLABORATION TEAM UPDATE

Staff provided a status update on the preparations of an Indigenous Engagement and Collaboration training session during the Spring 2024 semi-annual meetings. Commissioners indicated they wish to

continue to inform plans for this event. Commissioners also approved the coordinated distribution of a letter of invitation to Indigenous contacts to participate in discussions towards the formation of an IJC Indigenous Circle of Experts.

11. TOWARDS AN IJC INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

Staff and Commissioners discussed the decision process for attending and/or sponsoring international events relevant to the IJC's mandate. Commissioners decided to continue to assess invitations on a case-by-case basis in discussion with staff and other Commissioners.

ORAL UPDATES

12. IT REQUIREMENTS

Staff informed Commissioners all recommendations from the cybersecurity firm have been implemented. The team will continue the internal network security monitoring offered by the cybersecurity firm. Staff is planning to begin penetration testing in order to identify new trends and further improve our resilience to advanced threats.

13. COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES

Staff presented several informational updates, including on upcoming Commission speaking engagements, website and social media analytics, news releases and publications. Commissioners requested that Communications staff provide Commissioners with links to IJC press releases to facilitate their sharing on social media. Staff also informed Commissioners that Phase I of a website modernization project is now underway. Phase I involves conducting a needs assessment of the current IJC website and microsites and is expected to be completed in June 2024. Phase II will be the implementation phase of the project and result in an updated website. Additionally, Great Lakes Communications staff are preparing to release the results of the IJC's fourth Great Lakes Regional Poll. The Communications Team is continuing research for an improved service agreement for news release distribution, social media monitoring and daily news clips distribution that it hopes to have in place by April 2024.

14. GREAT LAKES – ST. LAWRENCE RIVER ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Staff presented an update on the recent GLAM workshop on February 6-8th in Quebec City with technical teams. The main goal of the workshop was to use preliminary data and test plans to evaluate the plan evaluation and ranking framework that will be used to inform recommendations by the International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board (ILOSRLB) at the end of the Expedited Review of Plan 2014. Staff proposed organizing short briefings with Commissioners leading up to the completion of Phase II of the expedited review in 2025, which will include recommendations from the ILOSRLB to the Commission. At the time of the executive meeting, water levels in the Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River basin are within normal range, although it is too early to forecast spring lake levels and outflows. Commissioners requested a briefing of current water level conditions along the transboundary heading into the spring freshet, including the probability for drought or flooding.

15. GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY BOARD

Staff presented an update on Water Quality Board (WQB) projects, 2024 workplan development, and membership. The WQB's Climate Adaptation and Community Resilience project has been identified as a regional priority and is developing a guide of dynamic planning tools, insights and opportunities designed for local and regional governments. The Great Lakes Horizons Phase II project is also proceeding,

including communications products that are expected to be completed in spring 2025. The WQB is preparing to release the results of its fourth Great Lakes Regional Poll to understand the public's perception of priorities for the Great Lakes in summer 2024. The Board is also working on moving the Great Lakes Restoration and Revitalization project forward in spring 2024. The Manure and Nutrient Management project was completed with the release of a report in 2023, and the WQB continues to explore options for a maintained Manure Nutrient Management Collaborative. The Board is currently developing its 2024 workplan, which is not anticipated to include new projects at this time. Liaisons are working on filling the seats of six members of the WQB whose terms have or will expire shortly and are participating in planning an open call with the SAB and HPAB to fill memberships.

16. GREAT LAKES SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

Staff presented an update on Science Advisory Board (SAB) activities; the SAB finalized the Great Lakes Early Warning System (GLEWS) Phase II report and hosted three workshops in January focused on microplastics, on the Great Lakes Science Plan Collaborative, and on winter science, respectively. The SAB is currently developing their 2024 workplans, including projects on climate change migration, and on Phase III of the GLEWS. Phase III would test the organizational and decision-making frameworks designed in Phase 2. Finally, Staff are preparing to launch an open call to fill a vacancy on the Science Priority Committee.

17. HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ADVISORY BOARD

Staff presented an update on Health Professionals Advisory Board (HPAB) activities, including the microbial water quality assessment phase I report completed in September 2023. Staff are preparing a Briefing Note for Polling seeking approval of a transmittal letter to governments and the posting of the Phase I report to the IJC website. Phase II of the project is in the contracting phase. The Fish Consumption Study Report workgroup is preparing to finalize its report by summer 2024, and the HPAB's joint project with the IRLWWB on mining is expected to be completed by summer 2024. Finally, Staff noted that they are working to fill the membership on HPAB, and that HPAB is developing two new project proposals, one focused on wild rice, and one on improved communications of health-related data.

18. INTERNATIONAL KOOTENAY LAKE BOARD OF CONTROL

Staff presented an update on membership, noting that a Canadian Co-chair of the Board is expected to be nominated in the near future. Advisors have been negotiating with the board regarding the implementation timelines of their initiatives. The Board is moving forward with Indigenous Engagement activities, on which staff have provided guidance. The Board is also eager to pursue its expansion initiative. The Board is considering initiating watershed board scoping meetings at their May public meeting. Commissioners reiterated their previous decision from the December 2023 executive meeting to begin international watershed board scoping activities in spring 2024 still stands. The Board continues to support postponing the development of a Plan of Study for the IJC's review of its 1938 Order until 2025, while the Commission's timeline is to start it this summer. Staff are preparing a short document to describe what a Plan of Study would entail. Discussions will continue at the Board's upcoming meeting during the first week of March.

19. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioners agreed to have a planning retreat/discussion to update Commissioner priorities (last completed for the 2019-2023 period). Secretaries are to identify potential meeting times including, for example, on the sidelines of Great Lakes Days in early March or during the Spring semi-annual meetings.

DECISIONS TAKEN VIA POLLING

IJC Data Policy

On December 11, 2023, Commissioners approved an IJC Data Policy which updates the previous 2017 IJC Data Policy. The revised IJC Data Policy recommends that IJC and board studies to establish data management committees and data management policies during the studies. The updated policy also includes direction requested by Commissioners specifically addressing storing Indigenous Knowledge and stating that proprietary data, including Indigenous Knowledge, will not be shared without consent.

International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board

On December 12, 2023, Commissioners approved the appointment of Dr. R Wayne Jenkinson as the Alternate Canadian Co-Chair of the International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board for a three-year period, effective December 22, 2023, ending December 21, 2026.

On December 27, 2023, Commissioners approved the re-appointment of Ms. Joan Frain for a 3-year term period, beginning retroactively on December 1, 2023, and ending November 30, 2026, or until a suitable nomination is received from the Province of Ontario; whichever occurs first.

Science Advisory Board - Research Coordinating Committee (SAB-RCC)

On December 19, 2023, Commissioners approved the appointment of Dr. Jennifer Winter as a Canadian member of the SAB-RCC for a three-year term starting December 15, 2023, and ending December 14, 2026.

On December 20, 2023, Commissioners approved the appointment of Ms. Lynn Bouvier as a Canadian member of the SAB-RCC for a three-year term starting November 15, 2023, and ending November 14, 2026.

International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control (IOLBC) and International Columbia River Board of Control (ICRBC)

On December 20, 2023, Commissioners approved the following appointments:

- To appoint Mr. Scott VanderKooi to be the U.S. Co-Chair for the IOLBC and the ICRBC for a three-year period, from January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2026.
- To extend the appointment for Dr. Cynthia Barton as the U.S. Co-Chair for the IOLBC and the ICRBC retroactive from September 16, 2023, through December 31, 2023.

International Rainy-Lake of the Woods Watershed Board (IRLWWB)

On December 20, 2023, Commissioners approved the following Adaptive Management Committee (AMC) US reappointment and appointments:

- The reappointment of Mr. Doug Franchot as a US member of the board and co-chair to the Community Advisor Group for a 36-month (3-year) term starting October 5, 2023, to October 5, 2026.
- The appointment of Mr. Jesse Anderson as US member of the AMC for a 36-month term starting October 5, 2023, to October 5, 2026.
- The appointment of Mr. Anthony Pirkl as US member of the AMC for a 34-month (2 years, 10 months) year term starting October 5, 2023, to August 5, 2026.
- The appointment of Mr. Matt Skoog as US member of the AMC for a 32-month (2 years, 8 months) term starting October 5, 2023, to June 5, 2026

On December 20, 2023, Commissioners approved the following appointments.

- Approve the appointment of Ms. Rhobi Chacha as a Canadian member of the IRLWWB starting December 15, 2023, until December 14, 2026.
- Approve the reappointment of Ms. Pam Tomevi as a US member of the IRLWWB starting January 1, 2024, until December 31, 2026.
- Approve the reappointment of Mr. Matthew Gouin as a US member of the IRLWWB starting December 5, 2023, until December 4, 2026.

On January 23, 2024, Commissioners approved the reappointment of Mr. Lucas King as a Canadian public member on the IRLWWB starting February 1, 2024, and ending January 31, 2027.

IOLBC and International Kootenay Lake Board of Control (IKLBC)

On December 22, 2023, Commissioners approved the appointment of Ms. Connie Chapman as a Canadian board member of both the IOLBC and IKLBC for a three-year period starting December 26, 2023, and ending December 23, 2026.

International St. Croix River Watershed Board (ISRWB)

On December 22, 2023, Commissioners approved the following appointments:

- The re-appointment of Chief Hugh Akagi (Canadian) for a three-year period retroactively starting July 15, 2023, and ending July 14, 2026.
- The re-appointment of Sean Ledwin (US) for a three-year period retroactively starting September 30, 2023, and ending September 29, 2026.

Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Adaptive Management (GLAM) Committee

On December 27, 2023, Commissioners approved the following appointments and re-appointments:

- Re-appoint Dr. Lauren Fry to be a US member of the GLAM Committee for a three-year term, retroactively from May 1, 2023, to April 30, 2026.
- Re-appoint Dr. Scudder Mackey as a US member of the GLAM Committee for a three-year term, retroactively from March 9, 2023, to March 9, 2026.
- Re-appoint Ms. Mary Austerman to be a US member of the GLAM Committee for a three-year term, retroactively from July 17, 2023, to July 16, 2026.
- Re-appoint Ms. Wendy Leger to be a Canadian member of the GLAM Committee for a three-year term, effective from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2026.
- Re-appoint Mr. Jacob Bruxer to be a Canadian member of the GLAM Committee for a three-year term, effective from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2026.
- Re-appoint Dr. Frank Seglenieks to be a Canadian member of the GLAM Committee for a three-year term, effective from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2026.
- Appoint Ms. Lauren Schifferle as a new US member of the GLAM Committee for a three-year term to replace Keith Koralewski who recently left the US Army Corps of Engineers.
- Appoint Mr. Isaac Noyes as a new Canadian member of the GLAM Committee for a three-year term to replace David Copplestone who has been reassigned to other duties within OMNRF and is unable to continue as a GLAM member.

International Red River Watershed Board (IRRWB)

On December 27, 2023, Commissioners approved the following appointments to the IRRWB:

- The appointment of Dr. Eric Lui, Director Research, Development and Technology for Brandon and Morden Research and Development Centres at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for a 3-year period, starting December 11, 2023, and ending December 14, 2026.

- The appointment of Dr. Lianne Postma, Division Manager Arctic and Aquatic Research at Fisheries and Oceans Canada for a 3-year period, starting December 11, 2023, and ending December 14, 2026.

Original signed by:

Christopher Wilkie
Secretary
Canadian Section

Susan Daniel
Secretary
United States Section