



**IJC Science Advisory Board – Science Priority Committee  
Fifty-fifth Meeting  
Meeting Summary**

**October 23, 2024 – 9:00am-12:00pm Eastern Time**

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<b>U.S. Members</b>	<b>Canadian Members</b>	<b>Commission Staff</b>
Lucinda Johnson (Co-Chair)	Gail Krantzberg (Co-Chair)	Matthew Child (Secretary)
Donna Kashian	Jérôme Marty	Jo Werba
Laura Johnson	Maggie Xenopoulos	Heather Stirratt
Margaret Noodin	Mike McKay	Megan McLaughlin
Drew Gronewold	Karen Kidd	
Bob Sterner (virtual)	Nandita Basu (virtual)	

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Regrets: John Livernois, Marta Venier

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Canadian Co-Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and round table introductions were completed. The August 6, 2024 meeting record was acknowledged. The meeting agenda was approved by consensus.

**2. Recently Approved Projects Prioritization & Potential New Projects**

Work Plans approved by Commissioners in April 2024 were reviewed in light of Commissioners' recent memo which requested the projects be prioritized and rescope, as appropriate, due to budget constraints.

Great Lakes Early Warning System Pilot Project

- The independent review task has been removed to reduce project costs.
- Both case studies are still planned (aqueous nitrogen and waterborne antimicrobial resistance).
- An 18-month timeline is envisioned, which means the report will not be available prior to preparation of the 2026 TAP report, although preliminary findings may be available by then.
- There was general agreement this project should be advanced in the current funding cycle.

Climate Migration

- It is recognized that the work plan is aligned with other collaborative efforts.

- There was general agreement that this project should be paused, pending confirmation of sufficient funds. If sufficient funds are confirmed in the current funding cycle it should be advanced in the current funding cycle, otherwise it can be advanced during the next funding cycle.

#### Great Lakes Atlas

- There have been contracting challenges with this project. The most recent request-for-proposals process yielded two proposals, but both were priced well above the cost estimate.
- It was noted that the work plan directly addresses the Commission's strategic priority on developing watershed tools, and the project was mentioned as being important during the Science Plan Workshop on monitoring, modeling and forecasting.
- There was general agreement with the project Co-Chairs' recommendation that the project should be paused until funding issues resolve.

In addition to the SAB projects described above, it was noted that the Board Co-Chairs have recommended that the HPAB projects on Knowledge Translation and Wild Rice be advanced in the current funding cycle.

New work plan topics were reviewed as follows:

#### Science for Water and Climate Solutions (Laura Johnson & Nandita Basu)

The work plan proposes to revisit the IJC Lake Erie Ecosystem Priority report from 2014 which assessed the efficacy of agricultural and urban beneficial management practices. The project brings a solutions-oriented perspective and includes an exploration of the disconnect between modeled and observed nutrient reductions associated with various BMPs across different landscapes. The assessment would focus on Lake Erie and other shallow eutrophic systems, although findings are expected to be transferable to other transboundary watersheds.

Through discussion the following points were raised:

- The work plan will focus primarily on water quality, although climate resiliency is also addressed since many BMPs benefit both.
- The work plan refers to climate in the title but not the objectives and this could be addressed through work plan revisions.
- Findings and outputs from the Pollution from Land Use Activities Reference Group (PLUARG) should be considered.
- The work plan should specifically mention nature-based solutions.
- The work plan could be socialized with the Annex 4 (Nutrients) Extended Subcommittee for their awareness and input.

#### Water and Waste Management Challenges & Innovation in the Great Lakes Greenhouse Sector (Mike McKay)

The influence of the greenhouse sector on water quality has been identified as a potentially significant issue and is receiving increasing management attention. There is ongoing source

attribution monitoring, and there are opportunities to amplify this work through outreach and engagement particularly in areas where the sector is growing rapidly e.g., southwest Ontario (Windsor/Essex and Niagara), Ohio and Michigan. The project could address a number of related objectives including assessing the current extent of the greenhouse sector, assessing contributions of the sector to tributary nutrient loadings, establishing a framework for future monitoring activities, and identifying challenges and solutions to water access and sustainability and wastewater impacts.

Through discussion the following points were raised:

- The influence of the legalization of cannabis on sector growth is not well understood but may be substantial.
- The focus of the water quality aspect of the work plan would be on nutrients. It is recognized that the sector also uses pesticides, but anticipated partners have limited analytical capacity for those pesticides.

There was general agreement that both work plan topics should be discussed with Commissioners during the SPC appearance.

### **3. Strategic Items**

#### Agreement Review

The recent memo from the Great Lakes Executive Committee Co-Chairs was reviewed. In light of the Co-Chairs' directive that the Annexes review the extent to which past Binational Priorities for Science and Action were completed in a timely and successful manner, there was general agreement that the SAB's previous input on the draft Priorities for Science should be recirculated to the Parties.

#### Commission Strategic Priorities

The Commission recently circulated its updated Strategic Priorities to its Boards. It was noted that the SPC's ongoing projects and new work plan topics directly address priorities related to a transboundary watershed approach (Strategic Priority #1). Strategic Priority #2 is addressed insofar as an Indigenous perspective represented on the SPC and several of its work groups, and the SPC has an ongoing project related to TEK, although it was noted the IJC's 'binational' brand is inconsistent with engendering multinational recognition of the value of different ways of knowing and understanding. For Strategic Priority #3, the IJC could bring additional resources to add value to its internal operations e.g., supporting early career researcher and student participation in Board projects and activities.

### **4. Ongoing Project Updates**

#### Microplastics Monitoring & Risk Assessment (Karen Kidd)

The draft final project report has been reviewed by the SAB and input will be incorporated into the final version which will go to Commissioners after the Semi-Annual meeting. Through discussion there was general agreement that the report recommendations do not need to be prioritized because there are only four. It was also clarified that report findings will be disseminated in

accordance with a communications plan that has been developed by IJC staff in consultation with the project Co-Chairs.

#### Great Lakes Winter Science (Maggie Xenopoulos)

The contractor's draft final report has been submitted and is currently being reviewed by the project Co-Chairs. Once the revised report has been reviewed by the project work group it will be forwarded to the SAB for red flag review. The work group will be asked to provide a perspective on report communications and dissemination, which should include potential contributions to the 2026 TAP report. Through discussion it was noted that winter science gaps and needs are applicable and transferable to other transboundary watersheds.

#### Traditional Ecological Knowledge (Jérôme Marty)

A listening session was recently held with the Grand Portage Tribe, and a number of interesting themes emerged from the discussion which will be incorporated into the project report. A final listening session is planned in late November which will involve several First Nations in the Thunder Bay, ON area. Project reporting is planned for the first half of 2025.

Due to time constraints, the Great Lakes Science Plan discussion was deferred to the SAB meeting.

#### **5. SPC Appearance**

The draft SPC Appearance slide deck was reviewed, and lead speaker assignments for each slide were made.

#### **6. Other Business & Adjournment**

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

*Meeting record prepared by Matthew Child and reviewed by Lucinda Johnson and Gail Krantzberg.  
Please forward any errors or omissions to [matthew.child@ijc.org](mailto:matthew.child@ijc.org)*