

United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

March 16, 2007

Dennis Schornack  
Chair, U.S. Section  
International Joint Commission  
1250 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, NW, Suite 100  
Washington, DC 20440

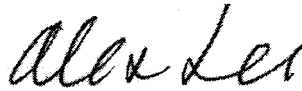
Dear Chairman Schornack:

On behalf of the United States Government, I am writing to express my appreciation for the International Joint Commission's "Thirteenth Biennial Report on Great Lakes Water Quality" (February 2007). Together with the "Synthesis of Public Comment" (April 2006) and the IJC's "Advice to Governments on Their Review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement" (October 2006), this report represents a valuable contribution to the Parties' efforts to review the GLWQA, and has suggested several fresh and thought-provoking possibilities for the future of the Agreement.

The two recommendations presented by the Commission in its Biennial Report were to accelerate the pace of the Agreement review and to implement an accountability framework for Great Lakes restoration and protection. While the United States agrees that a less lengthy review process might have been desirable, the current timeline is a matter of public record. Not only the two Parties, but representatives from states/provinces, municipalities, tribes/First Nations, NGOs and industry, have drawn up schedules and planned work loads in accordance with that timeline. Any acceleration would likely meet with considerable protest from review participants. The Commission's recommendation on accountability addresses a critical issue that has been raised frequently over the course of the review. However, it is premature for the U.S. Government to develop a position on that recommendation – such an action would prejudice the results of the review.

Again, thank you for your valuable assistance on this most recent review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. The two governments will be consulting the Commission's advice as they move forward on a decision how to best address Great Lakes restoration and protection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alex Lee".

Alex Lee  
Director, Office of Canadian Affairs  
U.S. Department of State