



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

November 19, 1998

Gerald E. Galloway
Secretary, United States Section
International Joint Commission
Suite 100
1250 23rd St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20440

Dear Dr. Galloway:

The Governments of Canada and the United States of America have received from the International Joint Commission its seminal report, *The IJC and the 21st Century*, constituting the response of the Commission to the request of 16 April, 1997 of the two Governments for proposals on how the IJC might best assist the parties to meet the environmental challenges of the 21st century.

In their March 10, 1998 meeting in Ottawa, the Secretary of State and the Minister of Foreign Affairs welcomed the recommendations of the report, and accepted in principle the proposal to establish international watershed boards that would adopt an integrated, ecosystem approach to transboundary environmental issues.

I have the honor to inform you that, pursuant to Article IX of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, the Governments of Canada and the United States have agreed to ask the International Joint Commission, in consultation with the two federal governments and with the relevant states and provinces, and with tribes, First Nations, and local interests, as appropriate, to carry out the following tasks:

(i) To further define the general framework under which watershed boards would operate, including, but not limited to mandate, scope of activities, and operating principles, recognizing that boards would be modified to meet the special circumstances of each watershed.

(ii) To recommend a location where the first international watershed board could be established.

(iii) To recommend the structure, composition, and terms of reference for such a board, including the priority issues that it would address.

(iv) To develop cost projections and possible sources of funding, including innovative funding mechanisms, for the task of forming the first international watershed board, and for the operation of the board, including cost projections for special studies that would be projected to be carried out by the board in the first few years of operation. In so doing the Commission and Governments shall be guided by the principle that forming and operating the new board shall entail the least possible requirement for new resources.

(v) At the same time, to pursue similar consultations with provinces and states, and the Governments of Canada and the United States of America, on the identification of locations, and the development, planning and establishment of additional international watershed boards at appropriate times.

The Governments request the Commission to pursue its activities, examinations, and consultations expeditiously, and to make periodic reports to the Governments as appropriate.

The Governments further request the Commission to initiate its work on these tasks drawing on resources from its current reference levels.

In carrying out these tasks, the Governments encourage the Commission to draw upon the expertise, data and technology available from the provinces, states and federal governments, communities, organizations, academic institutions, business, and others as appropriate to accomplish their task in a comprehensive manner.

As well, it is noted that numerous activities are underway within the international watersheds at federal, state and provincial government levels pertaining to water or land use management, environmental data gathering and monitoring, and other matters relevant to the international watershed board proposal. The Governments urge the Commission to draw upon and complement these initiatives to the extent it deems appropriate.

An identical letter is being sent to the Secretary of the Canadian Section of the Commission by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Victor D Comras". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Victor Comras
Director
Office of Canadian Affairs