

APPENDIX B

WATER QUALITY ALERT LEVELS

Water Quality Alert Levels are used to complement Water Quality Objectives. If exceeded, Alert Levels will trigger investigative action on the part of the Board or its representatives. The exceedence is addressed in terms of its magnitude, implications to water uses and possible resolutions. On the basis of Alert Level exceedences and subsequent investigations, the Board may advance proposals for additional objectives.

Water Quality Alert Levels, for a wide range of parameters, were developed by a working group in 1985. These Alert Levels were approved by the Board at the January 1986 meeting. The current Alert Levels that are in effect are listed in the following table. The working group and the agencies which are represented are currently exploring the development and use of ecosystem methodology for monitoring, including the water column, sediment and biological indicators (see IBI discussion in report). This monitoring will be reflected in additional or revised Objectives and Alert Levels. The following table shows the comparison of Alert Levels with the North Dakota and Minnesota Water Quality Standards, and with the Manitoba Water Quality Objectives as of 1990. The table has not been updated to reflect state or provincial revisions.

The term **“exceedence”** is used to describe a situation where an Objective or an Alert Level is not met. A situation is classified as an exceedence of an individual, instantaneous sample, obtained from the continuous auto-monitor, or through a grab sample, is equal to or greater than the corresponding Water Quality Objective or Alert Level (exception for Dissolved Oxygen - which is equal to or greater than the objective).

