

December 20, 2011

## Control Board prepares for ice formation

The International St. Lawrence River Board of Control (Board) recently reviewed conditions in the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River system. As ice formation in the critical sections of the river is unlikely before early January, the Board has decided to release outflows above those specified by the regulation plan for the next few weeks. This will remove the 2.9 cm (1.1 in) of water that is currently stored on Lake Ontario due to flows below those specified by the Plan last summer. The outflows will be reduced more gradually than specified by the Plan to prevent large changes in river levels as well as use up the water stored on the Lake. Some additional water is expected to be removed from the Lake as outflows above those specified by the plan will continue to be released in January until ice formation commences. However, the Board may vary outflows to meet any critical hydropower, navigational or other needs if required in the near future.

The level on Lake Ontario as of December 13, 2011 was 74.59 m (244.72 ft), 78 cm (30.7 in) below the upper limit and 6 cm (2.4 in) above the long-term average for that time of year. Water levels on Lake St. Lawrence have generally remained below average since August. Levels of the St. Lawrence River near Montreal have gradually fallen since May and have been slightly below seasonal long-term average since early fall. Port of Montreal levels rose quickly in early December due to significant rainfall. The level at the Port of Montreal on December 13, 2011 was 6.33 m (20.77 ft), 20 cm (7.9 in) below average.

The Board, in conjunction with its staff, continues to monitor the situation carefully and is prepared to take further action as required. The Board will review conditions in early January to determine an outflow strategy for the remainder of winter.

Water levels on both Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River can vary considerably from year to year. The Board urges everyone to be prepared to live within the full range of levels that have occurred. Although the Board strives to maintain the range of monthly mean levels of Lake Ontario below the upper limit of 75.37 m (247.3 ft) and above the lower limit (from April through November) of 74.15 m (243.3 ft) specified in the Orders of Approval, since regulation began in 1960, actual monthly levels have ranged from a high of 75.74 m (248.5 ft.) to a low of 73.82 m (242.2 ft) due to climate conditions outside the design range. Levels on the river tend to vary more widely. Furthermore, wind set up and wave rush may increase local levels on both the lake and river.

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*The International St. Lawrence River Board of Control was established by the International Joint Commission in its 1952 order of approval. The Board's main duty is to ensure that outflows from Lake Ontario meet the requirements of the IJC order; it also develops regulation plans and conducts special studies requested by the IJC. For more information, visit [http://ijc.org/conseil\\_board/islrbc/en/main\\_accueil.htm](http://ijc.org/conseil_board/islrbc/en/main_accueil.htm). To receive a weekly e-mail about water levels and flows in the Lake Ontario–St. Lawrence River system, please send a blank e-mail message to [stlaw-L-subscribe@cciw.ca](mailto:stlaw-L-subscribe@cciw.ca), with the word 'subscribe' in the title and body of your message.*