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June 16, 2006

United States Section Secretary
International Joint Commission
1250 23rd Street, N.W., Suite 100
Washington, D.C. 20440

Re: International Joint Commission - Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Study

Dear Madam or Sir:

I have spent part or all of virtually every summer on Wellesley Island, in the St. Lawrence River near Alexandria Bay, New York. I own two cottages and several parcels of land there, with a total of over 700 feet of waterfront. From the perspective of a recreational boater and someone who loves the environment, the biggest problem is that the water is too shallow, particularly in August and September. It is my understanding this is due to the fact that too much water is let out at the hydro facility near Massena, New York.

In the late 1940's and 1950's (before the Seaway was completed) there were frequently large seasonal fluctuations in the water levels. I suspect that was nature's way of "flushing" sediment, etc. out of the river. Over the last 50 years it is obvious that many of the shallower channels in the Thousand Islands are filling in with sediment, decayed weeds, etc.

I have always been told that the ultimate source of water for the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River is Lake Superior, and snow fall in that region is crucial. That snow fall has been below average for the last several years, and with global warming apparently a reality, that trend will worsen.

I have also been told that the electric power company at Massena likes to sell electricity at higher prices in July and August, when it is hot in New York City and demand is high. I frankly think that it a very poor reason for letting out water that otherwise should not be let out.

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I have also heard that residents with waterfront property on Lake Ontario are concerned about erosion. Frankly, erosion has been happening there for centuries, and it is a known risk of owning such property. I don't think that is a valid reason to try to keep the water level on Lake Ontario low.

I certainly hope your organization prevents any diversions of water from Lake Ontario or the St. Lawrence River for any reason. I recall a few years ago that Nestle wanted to build a water bottling plant on Lake Michigan, and was going to use millions of gallons of water a week. With Lake Huron at such a low level, I think steps should be taken immediately to prevent any diversions of water throughout the Great Lakes.

I hope your organization's goal is to preserve a unique and beautiful part of the world. Please do not let special interests deter you from that goal.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary H. Rushmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gary H. Rushmer

GHR/ss