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Kingston Yacht Club

Kingston ON

June 24, 2008

**The following is the submission to the International Joint Commission - Great Lakes Water Levels presented by Jr. Past Commodore Ralph Shaw at the Public Hearing to address 'The Review of the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River Order of Approval', held at Kingston City Hall on the evening of 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2008:**

Good evening, Commissioners.

Thank-you for the opportunity to speak this evening. My name is Ralph Alan Shaw. I am Jr. Past Commodore of the Kingston Yacht Club and I appear before you at the behest of Commodore Robert Colwell, who sends his regards and his regrets that he cannot be here this evening.

I have come to speak before you this evening on behalf of the members and Board of Directors of the Kingston Yacht Club to respond to your request for comment on the *"Draft new Order and plan for regulation of water levels and flows for Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River proposed by IJC"*.

The Kingston Yacht Club was founded in 1896 at its present location on the shores of Lake Ontario and currently consists of more than 600 members and has 87 wet moorings. We are a social and a recreational club. Our members range in age from less than one year to over 90. We annually host the 4<sup>th</sup> largest sailing school for both junior and adult sailors in North America. We are proud to number 4 Olympians among our members. We are affiliated with the Canadian Yachting Association, Ontario Sailing and the Eastern Yachting Circuit. We operate a gas dock and pump out facility and a marine railway, so we are a business, we are taxpayers and we are what might be considered 'consumers' of the Lake Ontario waterfront.

Members of our Club have been tracking the water level on Lake Ontario on a monthly basis since 1861, for a total of 147 years; that is, since before Canadian Confederation and since the start of the United States Civil War. Between 1861 and 1957, the water level of Lake Ontario rose above 247 feet above sea level 24 times. It fell below 244 feet only twice. From 1958 to this year, it has been allowed to rise above 247 feet 7 times and allowed to fall below 244 feet 17 times. Since 1958, it would seem there has been a pronounced tendency to reduce the water level of Lake Ontario.

When the water on Lake Ontario is lowered to below 244 feet above sea level during our period summer operations, it has a severe negative impact on those operations. Our marine railway is rendered inoperable, deeper draft vessels cannot use our gas dock and most of our

members' boats have to be hauled-out to eliminate the risk of them grounding while tied up to their dock or mooring (and, thus, denying members access to their recreation and the use of their investment). Because our mooring basin and docks are located over limestone bedrock, dredging more than a few inches is not an option.

**We strongly oppose "Plan 2007" which would result in a lower water level than experienced under "Plan 1958" and support "Plan B+".**

The potential in 'Plan 2007' to lower the water levels in Lake Ontario and to do so early in the year, which would thereby shorten our season, places the continued viability of the Kingston Yacht Club in jeopardy.

Thank-you.

*Submitted on behalf of the members of  
the Kingston Yacht Club.*

*Bob Howell*

*Commodore*