

# **CORNWALL & DISTRICT ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**"TAKING CARE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT FOR OURSELVES AND OUR CHILDREN"**

July 10, 2008

## **Final Submission to the International Joint Commission (IJC) on the Draft new Order and plan for regulation of water levels and flows for Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River**

The Cornwall & District Environment Committee (CDEC) is a group of volunteers some of whom were members of the Public Advisory Committee of the St. Lawrence (Cornwall) Remedial Action Plan (RAP). While involved in the RAP process, the members acquired a comprehensive knowledge about the issues in this Area of Concern. CDEC's mandate encourages responsible environmental protection and restoration by citizens, industries, governments through communication, education, lobbying and community involvement.

The CDEC is in favour of the implementation of Plan B+ as soon as possible. The Committee understands the problems that the Commission faces and the reasons that Plan 2007 is being suggested at this time.

The CDEC understands the complications with the need to involve the federal governments of Canada and the United States as well as the provincial governments of Ontario and Quebec and the state government of New York. However the CDEC believes that these five governments must be told that they have only two years before the IJC will implement Plan B+.

The five governments must work with all the stakeholders during the two years to organize mitigation plans. The IJC must be prepared to implement Plan B+ in two years time regardless of the state of these mitigation plans. Without such a deadline, the governments will drag their feet and Plan B+ will just be wishful thinking.

The IJC must insist that the federal governments sufficiently support the new Lake-Ontario St. Lawrence River Board monetarily so that it can do all that it must to monitor the new plan, apply adaptive management and communicate transparently with the public.

We are sure that the IJC knows the costs that the new Board would incur and therefore what should be demanded as the yearly budget for the new Board. The IJC should insist in the strongest terms that the federal governments must fulfill their obligations to the new Board.

The IJC has heard, over the course of the five year Study and during the Public Hearings this spring, the many diverse concerns of the diverse interests. In most cases, citizens or groups or businesses will accept adaptations if it is explained to them fully. Since the

new plan should be able to adapt to our changing climate, we can adapt to changes in the flow regimes if they are explained fully. Communication is going to be even more important.

In closing, B+ must be implemented by the time of the review in two years. The IJC must use all its resources to ensure that that the five governments formalize mitigation within two years and financially support, long-term, the Lake-Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board so that it can implement adaptive management and a comprehensive communication plan.

Yours environmentally,

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