

<http://blog.wwf.ca/blog/2015/06/19/one-year-after-its-submission-governments-have-still-not-adopted-plan-2014/>

# One year after its submission, governments have still not adopted Plan 2014

**REBECCA DOLSON** • JUNE 19, 2015

One year ago today, on June 19, 2014, the International Joint Commission (IJC) submitted a new water level and flow regulation plan for Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River to the governments of Canada and the United States. As of today neither government has made a decision on whether or not to adopt the IJC's submission, called **Plan 2014**.



*A boat entering the Port Hope harbour on Lake Ontario, Ontario, Canada. © Frank PARHIZGAR / WWF-Canada*

Plan 2014 is a well-balanced water level and flow management strategy for Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River that will help restore over 26,000 hectares of wetlands, boost hydropower production, and increase the resilience of hundreds of kilometers of shorelines in the U.S. and Canada. Last year the IJC asked both governments to immediately adopt Plan 2014 and halt more than 50 years of habitat loss and degradation caused by the current water management regime (Plan 1958-D). The current water level plan, in place since 1958, doesn't allow for natural variability in water level or flow that is essential to maintaining healthy, resilient ecosystems. **WWF-Canada supported the IJC** and called on governments to implement Plan 2014 because it offers the best opportunity to reverse some of the harm to coastal habitats while balancing water uses and minimizing the potential increase in damage to shoreline protection structures. Water level and flows in Lake Ontario are controlled through the Moses-Saunders hydropower dam on the St. Lawrence River, which is part of the St. Lawrence Seaway system.

The Plan was developed over more than 14 years and is based on sound scientific principles; natural flows are variable and are required to maintain healthy, resilient ecosystems. Plan 2014 will still regulate Lake Ontario / St. Lawrence River water levels and flows and manage for extreme high and low flows, reducing the impact of flooding and droughts. During the Plan's development, millions of dollars were spent on scientific studies to assess alternate water level plans and their potential impacts and benefits to the Lake Ontario / St. Lawrence River ecosystem and the regional economy.

There is overwhelming support for Plan 2014, especially from Canadians. We recognize this historic opportunity to improve the health of our Great Lakes region and preserve it for generations to come. The IJC concludes their letter to both governments, saying "On whole, the IJC is confident that Plan 2014 is the best management path for the human, plant, and animal communities and for the commercial interests that depend on Lake Ontario and the St.

Lawrence River system in both Canada and the United States.” And we couldn’t agree more. It’s **TIME** to adopt and implement Plan 2014.

