

Public Hearing Presentation
on
The International Joint Commission's Proposed New Order and Plan 2007
for
Regulation of Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River Water Levels & Outflows
by
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Port Jordan, Ontario

My name is Doug Cuthbert and I live in Burlington, Ontario. I am known to some of you through my role as the Canadian Co-Chair of the Study Board that delivered the 5-year study and report on this topic to the Commission two years ago.

I am here today as an interested observer and member of the public. I have not participated in any way in the work of the Commission over the past two years in developing this Proposed New Order and Plan 2007.

I have mixed views on the proposed new Plan 2007, the New Order and the process followed by the Commission in their development.

Seven and a half years ago the IJC initiated the International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study and commissioned a 14-member multidisciplinary Study Board to lead the work. Over the next five years culminating in the delivery of the draft report to the Commission in December 2005, some 180 people and dozens of organizations participated in the Study. Volunteer efforts of the Study's Public Advisory Group were a significant, unique and an invaluable part of this work. This was one of the most comprehensive and publicly interactive studies ever undertaken by the Commission. Three viable regulation plans entitled A+, B+ and D+ were developed from many candidate plans and forwarded to the Commission for consideration. The Board's report was transmitted in final form to the Commission in April 2006 and released publicly two years ago this month.

Since then the Commission has been publicly silent as to their deliberations and actions regarding this work. Public meetings were signaled for 2007 but deferred. After two years of silence, the Commission has released a draft New Order and Plan for public comment. This Plan is different from those forwarded to the Commission by the multidisciplinary Study Board in 2005.

My first comment is therefore a process one, in that after five years of a very open and publicly interactive investigation, the subsequent two years of silence from the Commission raises suspicious as to how, why and what the Commission have come up with – suspicions in the minds of the hundreds of people who directly participated in or contributed to the previous Study Board's work and in the minds of the public and interest groups who are affected by fluctuating Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River water levels and flows.