1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its report to the Governments of Canada and the United States "The IJC and the 21st Century" (October 1997), the International Joint Commission (IJC) presented its vision of how the IJC can be of greater assistance to the governments in meeting future transboundary environmental challenges. One of the proposals related to undertaking studies on crucial transboundary issues related to transboundary air quality. Consistent with the direction advocated in that report, Progress Report 24 of the International Air Quality Advisory Board (IAQAB) reviews progress made on acid gas emissions (sulfur and nitrogen oxides), including the efforts of the New England Governors and Atlantic Premiers to take a binational approach to measurement and control of these contaminants. The Commission is encouraged to advocate further support for this effort from both federal governments.

The Board also describes the activities of the OntAIRio Coalition towards cleaner air, including advocating specific targets for nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and mercury emissions from Ontario Hydro facilities. Noting the recent efforts of the Ontario government to shield Ontario Hydro emission data from public access, the Board encourages the Commission to intervene with both federal governments and emphasize the need for public access to such information, particularly given the ongoing restructuring of this industry in both countries.

In the case of nitrogen oxides (NO_X) emissions, the Board reviews the recent United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) action for further NO_X control through a call for State Implementation Plans (SIPs), the subsequent challenge to these plans by selected states and other entities in federal court, and the participation of Canada and Ontario in these proceedings. In considering mobile sources, the sizable NO_X emissions from diesel engines and the benefits of the recent U.S. settlement with the six major engine manufacturers, with possible parallel activity in Canada, are reviewed. Further regulation of light truck and sport utility vehicles (SUVs) in the United States is discussed, as well as the Ontario Drive Clean program. The most recent efforts to control sulfur levels in gasoline, and the possible need to revise sulfur limits in diesel and other fuels is noted.

With regard to ozone, recent U.S. and Canadian actions and considerations are reviewed; the Board encourages the Commission to request a more detailed commitment from both governments toward completion of an Ozone Annex to the Canada United States Air Quality Agreement. The environmental impacts of Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE), a gasoline additive meant to improve performance and air quality, are considered. The Board notes that failure to adequately control MTBE leaks into water supplies will likely result in discontinued use in several regions and possibly throughout both nations.

Progress in implementation of the fine particulate ($PM_{2.5}$) regulation in the United States and parallel developments in Canada are discussed in the context of monitoring for this contaminant. The Board recommends that the Commission seek assurances from both governments that the outputs of their monitoring efforts will be directly comparable and that both programs will identify the content, particularly the hazardous component, of the particulate sampled. Placement of two U.S. $PM_{2.5}$ monitoring Supersites in reasonable proximity to the international boundary is also recommended. Movement toward a regional haze regulation in the United States, and its linkage to fine particulate management is described. This chapter concludes the report; the members of the Board are listed as Chapter 8.0 of this document.