



Despite the passage of time, I would suggest the foundations of the 1921 treaty are still valid, though there is some need for updating the agreement to ensure that both countries continue to derive the greatest possible benefit. Two of the core principles of that agreement will be important well into the future.

First, in framing the 1921 agreement, the members of the IJC team wisely established a minimum 25% flow for each country in order to ensure a continuous flow downstream, notwithstanding the prior appropriations granted to each country. This is an important economic and environmental safeguard.

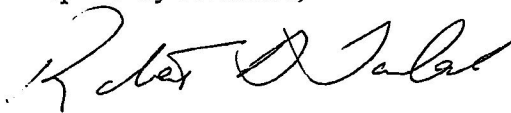
Second, the principle of balancing water apportionment on a real time rather than an annual basis is at the core of the agreement. For either signatory to attempt to meet the letter of the agreement by releasing water downstream during the non-irrigation season would be fatal to the agreement.

An alternative strategy would be for both countries to work together to ensure that irrigation farmers on both sides of the border receive the maximum benefit from our shared water resource. Water storage capacity on the Canadian side of the border may provide unique opportunities for fine tuning the system to ensure the maximum benefit for both partners.

Still another opportunity for sharing exists in terms of successful irrigation experience and technology. The extensive experience on the Alberta side of the border with highly efficient water storage, canal systems, and irrigation farming techniques might well be shared with water system managers and irrigation farmers on the Montana side. For whatever reason, I believe it is generally recognized that system operators on the Montana side of the border have not invested as heavily in water management infrastructure as their Alberta counterparts. The potential winning card for Montana is that it can develop new infrastructure using the newest technologies while avoiding mistakes that were made on the Alberta side.

If the future is anything like that predicted by scientists, citizens in both our countries would do better to work toward enhancing irrigation infrastructure and technology. We need to face the prospect of a future in which water may be less plentiful than it is today. We prepare for that possibility, not by fighting over what may be a shrinking resource, but by working together to ensure that all users manage our shared water resource in the best possible manner.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert D. Tarleck". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Robert D. Tarleck, Mayor, City of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada