



International Joint Commission's

**INTERNATIONAL NIAGARA
BOARD OF CONTROL**



MEDIA ADVISORY

December 16, 2016

LAKE ERIE – NIAGARA RIVER ICE BOOM

***INSTALLATION PLANNED TO BEGIN
DECEMBER 16, 2016***

BUFFALO, NEW YORK ----- Placement of the 22 spans of the Lake Erie-Niagara River Ice Boom is about to start.

Each winter since 1964, the Lake Erie-Niagara River Ice Boom has been installed near the outlet of Lake Erie to reduce the amount of ice entering the Niagara River. Reduction in ice entering the river reduces the potential for ice jams which can result in damage to shoreline property and significantly reduce water flow for hydro-electric power production.

Under the International Joint Commission's (IJC) 1999 Supplementary Order of Approval, placement of the spans may begin when the Lake Erie water temperature at Buffalo reaches 4°C (39°F) or on December 16, whichever comes first. Installation of the ice boom is planned to begin on Friday December 16, weather permitting.

The New York Power Authority (NYPA) and Ontario Power Generation (OPG) are authorized to use the boom by the IJC within its mandate through the Order of Approval. The International Niagara Board of Control administers the Order on behalf of the IJC. The NYPA and OPG must ensure that the requirements of the Order of Approval are met in installation, operation, and removal of the boom. Ownership as well as the cost of operating and maintaining the boom is shared equally by NYPA and OPG, while NYPA is responsible for installing, operating, and removing the boom. NYPA and OPG are also responsible for meeting any other United States or Canadian laws that may pertain to the use of the boom.

The 2.7-kilometre (1.7-mile) long boom is installed at the outlet of Lake Erie, at the entrance to the Niagara River, to promote the formation and strengthening of a naturally occurring ice arch that reduces the amount of ice entering the Niagara River. The ice boom has substantially reduced the severity, number and duration of ice runs from Lake Erie into the Niagara River.

Severe storms with westerly winds may overcome the stability of the ice arch and force large masses of ice against the boom. The boom is designed so that when this occurs, it submerges and allows the ice to override it until the pressure is relieved. Once the storm subsides, the boom resurfaces and restrains ice which otherwise would flow down the river. The ice boom does not inhibit the flow of water out of the lake into the Niagara River.

The International Joint Commission's International Niagara Board of Control will monitor the operation of the boom and ice conditions throughout the winter.

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