

Great Lakes Water Quality Board – 186th Meeting
Meeting Summary
November 14, 2014 (2:30-4:00 p.m.)
via Teleconference

US Member Participants

Dave Ullrich (Co-Chair)
Sandy Bihn
Doug Busdeker
Bill Creal
Cameron Davis (for Susan Hedman)
Marvourneen Dolor
Jane Elder
Sue McCormick
Mike Ripley
Matthew Thompson

Canadian Member Participants

Rob de Loë (Co-Chair)
Rob Fleming
Mike Goffin
Caroline Gravel
Christopher Hilkene
John Jackson
Dean Jacobs
Betty Matthews-Malone
Mark Mattson
Jean Painchaud
Russ Powers
Gayle Wood

Commission Staff

Matthew Child – Great Lakes Regional Office (WQB A/Secretary)
Dave Dempsey – US Section (WQB Liaison)
Cindy Warwick – Canadian Section (WQB Liaison)
Marty Bratzel – Great Lakes Region Office
Hugh McDiarmid – Great Lakes Regional Office

1. Welcome and Roll Call (Rob de Loë)

The Canadian Co-Chair welcomed everyone to the 186th Meeting of the Board. A roll call was taken.

2. Review of September 24 & 25, 2014 Meeting Record (Matthew Child)

Matthew Child reviewed the action items from the previous meeting. All action items were completed.

3. Update on Board Appearance at IJC's Semi-Annual Meeting (Rob de Loë)

The Canadian Co-Chair summarized outcomes from the Semi-Annual meeting. Due to the Parliament Hill shooting-related lockdown, a joint meeting of the WQB, Science Advisory Board and Health Professionals Advisory Board Co-Chairs on October 22 proceeded by phone. The focus of the call was on cross-Board coordination, particularly related to Indicators. The Co-Chairs agreed to identify Board leads for issues of shared interest e.g., PBDEs.

During the WQB Co-Chairs appearance on October 23, the Commission approved the Board's draft Work Plans in principle.

4. Work Plans (Rob de Loë and Dave Ullrich)

The Co-Chairs offered some introductory remarks in relation to the Board's Work Plans, noting that they need to continue to strike a balance between being guided by Board members, with reliance on staff and contractors for completion of specific activities.

Legacy Issues Work Plan (Co-Leads Gayle Wood and Matt Thompson)

The Canadian Co-Lead described a proposed project to assess integrated watershed management in the context of nutrient loadings to Lake Erie. Through discussion, it was clarified that the project intends to assess the status and adequacy of watershed plans, whether there are appropriate monitoring programs, report carding and communications systems in place, and whether the governance structure is appropriate. There was general agreement that the WQB analysis should not duplicate the target-setting development work being completed by Annex 4. Rather, the WQB analysis should focus on how those targets get implemented.

ACTION: Work Group and staff to develop a more detailed Work Plan assessing integrated watershed management and nutrient reductions to Lake Erie, targeting the February 9-11, 2015 Commission meeting (Commission briefing notes are due the week of January 26, 2015).

The Work Group's PBDE Work Plan was discussed, and consists of four components. The first component will compile available background information and comment on the significance of the findings, while the second will result in original contributions in the areas of product handling, use and disposal and implications for the Great Lakes. The final two components will assess the adequacy of regulatory and non-regulatory government actions to minimize impacts on the lakes, and offer conclusions, advice and recommendations. Through discussion, it was clarified that components 2 and 3 will require contractor assistance, with some activities getting underway prior to March 31, 2015 subject to Commission approval.

ACTION: Work Group and staff to finalize and submit the PBDE Work Plan for consideration by the Commission on their December 5, 2014 teleconference call.

Emerging Issues Work Plan (Co-Leads Mike Ripley and Christopher Hilken)

The U.S. Co-Lead summarized recent Emerging Issues Work Group activities, which have focused primarily on an assessment of adaptation of climate change impacts. The Work Group will also develop Watching Briefs on select topics.

The Work Plan on climate change consists of three main components, which will focus primarily on climate change adaptation. The first focuses on what jurisdictional authorities are doing with a specific focus on climate change, as well as activities that address specific climate change impacts of interest to the WQB. The second component will identify specific gaps in the regulatory framework, while the third component will assess the roles of non-regulatory sectors related to climate change. The Board will develop its advice for the Commission using the information developed by a contractor.

ACTION: Work Group and staff to develop a more detailed Work Plan assessing climate change impacts on the Great Lakes, targeting the February 9-11, 2015 Commission meeting (Commission briefing notes are due the week of January 26, 2015).

The Canadian Co-Lead discussed preliminary activities related to the development of Watching Briefs on fossil fuel development and transportation, and pharmaceuticals and personal care products. Staff has compiled an information package on Watching Briefs, and will orient interested Work Group members during an upcoming Work Group call. It is expected that staff will provide substantial assistance to Board Members in the preparation and updating of Watching Briefs.

The Canadian Board Co-Chair reminded the Board that the Secretary maintains a log of active and inactive Watching Brief topics.

ACTION: Work Group members should forward any potential Watching Brief topics to the Board Secretary for inclusion in the Watching Brief log.

The U.S. Board Co-Chair recommended that the issue of mining impacts on the Great Lakes be added as an inactive Watching Brief item, noting that there is substantial interest in the issue especially in the upper Great Lakes.

Public Engagement Work Plan (Co-Leads Marvourneen Dolor and Mark Mattson)

The U.S. Co-Lead described the current Work Plan and its primary focus on developing a WQB Public Engagement Strategy, and organizing public events associated with face-to-face Board meetings. The Work Group's staff lead noted that a webinar is planned for all advisory Boards to discuss their communications needs with staff. Work Group members expressed an interest in participating in the webinar.

ACTION: Work Group's staff lead and Co-Leads to move the Work Group's Work Plan forward.

Indicators Work Group (Dave Ullrich)

The Work Group lead reminded the Board about the ongoing IJC Indicators work. This includes the SAB's work to identify a smaller set of Apex Indicators from the list of 16 Ecological Indicators, and to use Indicators to develop an index for each of the Agreement's General Objectives. The Health Professionals Advisory Board recently issued their report on Human Health Indicators. A preliminary draft report on Program Effectiveness Indicators prepared by IJC staff was recently circulated to the WQB (and other Advisory Boards) for review and comment.

ACTION: Board members should forward any comments on the draft Program Effectiveness Indicators report to the A/Secretary by November 28, 2014.

During the joint Co-Chairs discussion at the Ottawa Semi-Annual it was agreed that a cross-Board Work Group should be established. A conference call has been scheduled in December to discuss a Work Plan for the group, which will include coordination with Annex 10, among other things.

5. Other Items

The Canadian Co-Chair emphasized the benefit of face-to-face Work Group meetings to advance priorities and build familiarity with one another. Work Group members are encouraged to consider face-to-face meetings in addition to teleconferencing.

The IJC is developing a Geospatial Strategy and will be consulting with Advisory Board members. WQB members will be invited to participate in an online survey in the coming period.

6. Next Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 18, 2015 from 2:30-4:00 p.m. EST via teleconference.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting record prepared by Matthew Child and reviewed by Rob de Loë and Dave Ullrich. Please forward any errors or omissions to childm@windsor.ijc.org.