

# INTERNATIONAL ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BOARD OF CONTROL

## Minutes of the March 21, 2013 Board meeting Held in Chicago, IL

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 AM March 21<sup>st</sup> and chaired by BG Margaret Burcham, U.S. Chair. Those in attendance were:

United States		Canada
	Board Members	
BG M. Burcham Mr. J. Bernier Mr. T. Brown Dr. T. Hullar Dr. F. Sciremammano, Jr.		Mr. P. Morel Mr. A. Carpentier Ms. J. Frain
	Secretaries	
Mr. J. Kangas		Ms. G. Faveri
	Regulation Representatives	
LTC O. Beaudoin Mr. P. Yu (Alt.)		Mr. J. Bruxer (Alt.)
	Associates	
Mr. T. Lavigne Mr. B. Whitcomb Ms. C. Fisher		Ms. S. Farrell-Zeran
	Others	
Mr. K. McCune, Corps		Ms. P. Clavet Mr. D. Fay, IJC

### 1 Approval of agenda

The agenda was amended and adopted (attached).

### 2 Current Conditions and Regulation Strategy

Mr. Yu presented a report on current conditions as of Monday, March 19, that included:

- ▶ Lakes Michigan-Huron are 66 cm (26 in) below average. New records lows were established for the months of December and January.
- ▶ Lake Erie was 19 cm (7 in) below its long-term average and 50 cm (20 in) below last year at this time.
- ▶ Lake Ontario was at elevation 74.60 m (244.75 ft). This was 7 cm (3 in) below average and 38 cm (15 in) below last year. [Under preproject conditions, the level would be

about the 14 cm higher; under BV7 it would be about the same].

- ▶ There are no deviations relative to strict adherence to Plan 1958-D.
- ▶ Ice coverage in the Beauharnois Canal this past season was much less than average. The date of last ice in the canal was March 15.
- ▶ Montreal Harbour levels on March 19<sup>th</sup> were about 68 cm (27 in) below average, 143 cm (56 in) below last year, and 71 cm (28 in) above chart datum.
- ▶ The snowpack on the Lake Ontario basin was reported to be slightly below average. The Ottawa River upper basin was reported to have above average snowpack. Ottawa River freshet has not yet started.
- ▶ The risk of violating the high level criteria for Lake Ontario through June is about 1 %. The risk of low levels through June on Lake Ontario is much less than 1%; the risk of low levels downstream at Lac St-Louis is about 8%; and the risk of levels below datum at Montreal Harbour is about 33%.

The Board agreed to begin storing 5 cm (2 in) of accumulated under-discharges on Lake Ontario when the level at Pte Claire reaches 21.8 m (71.5 ft). Further under-discharges may be needed to avoid the level at Pte. Claire from exceeding 22.1 m (72.5 ft), its flood alert level. The disposition of the stored water will be discussed at the Board meeting in Washington, DC, in April. The stored water may be retained for use in the Fall, should water supplies in the near future remain below average, or released should supplies be high. The Board noted that the near-term raising of Lake Ontario relative to the plan-specified level would have a positive impact on fish spawning and recreation boating.

### **3 Plans for March 26 teleconference with public**

Mr. Kangas reported on the near-final plans for the meeting. Dr. Sciremammano will host the teleconference from the RIT campus; draft slides have been posted to the web and updated slides will be posted before the meeting; webinar and toll-free telephone options will allow the public to participate remotely. A facilitator packet will be sent to all Board Members later in the week. This led to a discussion of public meetings and the amount and cost of preparing and participating in each. BG Burcham proposed that the use of webinars could be an option for the Board to consider on a case-by-case basis, instead of face-to-face meetings. The Board agreed to explore this with the Commission at the Spring Appearances. The current Commission guidance on public meetings does not address this contingency.

### **4 Communications Committee activities**

a) FAQs: Ms. Faveri reported that the FAQs have been updated with several being added as a result of last year's conditions. They are awaiting translation and will be posted to the Board's web page in the near future.

b) Webinar: The issue of Board use of webinars in lieu of public meetings was discussed earlier.

c) Sharepoint: Mr. Bruxer reported that the Commission is implementing a Sharepoint

site for use by each of its Boards. Invitations to join the site will be sent out by the Commission in the near future. Once invitations are received there will be a 48-hour window to respond.

## **5 Other Business**

a) Gauging Committee report: Ms. Faveri reported on Gauging Committee activities on behalf of Mr. Mike McNiven. The Board approved the 2011 annual report, with the Gauging Committee agreeing to prioritize the work items beginning with the 2012 report. The Power Entities representatives noted that projects typically take several years to be funded, scheduled and completed. The data audit for the 2012 annual report is underway.

b) Adaptive Management Task Team update: Dr. Hullar began with a discussion of the Task Team's efforts and accomplishments to date. He noted that he had served as part of an advisory group to the Task Team. His concerns with the report centered on 5 issues: 1) the term "extreme" was not defined; 2) authorities were not clear; 3) it implies an adaptive management group for each Control Board (this was subsequently clarified as a single body); 4) whether the report and proposed actions were flexible or fixed; and, 5) rather than further refining the adaptive management approach, starting soon and adaptively managing the adaptive management process would be a good way forward. Dr. Sciremammano noted that he had had similar observations. He also had concerns about which processes would be measured and how they would be measured was not defined; also, funding levels identified only support the proposed organizational structure, and not data gathering or analysis. Mr. McCune provided additional background on the draft report, noting the Shared Vision models exist for tracking performance with regard to indicators used in the development of the new regulation plans as part of the LOSLR and IUGLS studies. If no funding is available to improve upon those indicators then these initial assumptions will continue to be used as the best available information. The Levels Advisory Board will network experts, monitor science, and advise on the potential need to update the performance indicators. The AM Committee supports the Control Boards by maintaining and running the SVM models for the performance indexing and provides results to the Control Board to include in their system performance reporting.

Ms. Lee then provided an overview presentation on the Adaptive Management Task Team via webinar. A wide range of projected future climates was addressed. She discussed the two main elements and the five components/themes. Networks will focus on each of the 5 themes. She noted that the Levels Advisory Board will have membership from Federal and State/Provincial Governments, the Control Boards, and stakeholders. Four performance indicators for Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River will be addressed initially. The verification of flood levels for Lake Ontario and an assessment of existing shoreline protection are currently underway. The total (U.S. and Canada) costs for a 3-year startup was estimated at about \$10 M; thereafter, on-going costs will be about \$1M annually. Pilot projects are expected to cost about \$1M. The Board agreed to send comments in writing to the Task Team leads. Board Members were requested to send their comments to the Secretaries by April 4 for compilation and forwarding.

c) Update on animation: Ms. Favari showed the draft animation for the impacts of flows in the lower St. Lawrence River. She noted that the French translation was not yet available. The Board provided several comments on the animation and requested that it not be shown to the public until the comments are incorporated.

d) Reg Rep MOU. The Reg Reps reported that they are in full agreement on the procedures to be followed in implementing the 1971 Addendum to the Op Guides. The final MOU will be provided to the Board Secretaries for the records.

e) Kinetic turbines proposal: Mr. Yu reported on a proposed project to place up to 50 turbines along the bottom of the St. Lawrence River near Alexandria Bay. The transboundary impact, if any, is not known at this time. FERC has approved a feasibility study, which will include transboundary impacts. The Corps' Buffalo District plans to meet with the project proponents in May. The Commission's guide to applications has been provided to the project proponents.

## **6 Semi-annual progress report**

Mr. Kangas led a discussion of the draft progress report. Comments and corrections were provided. An advance copy of the report is expected to be submitted to the Commission in the next few days.

## **7 Appearance and upcoming Board events**

The Board will meet the afternoon of Wednesday, April 17 at the IJC offices in Washington, DC. The Reception will be that evening. The Board will appear before the IJC on the morning of Thursday, April 18, at the Embassy Suites.

The Board has scheduled conference calls for May 8, June 12, July 10, and August 14.

The next teleconference and public meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 17 in Oswego and Cornwall, subject to further discussions with the Commission at the Appearances on the use of webinars. The date and venue for the Fall meeting will be determined in cooperation with the Lake Superior and Niagara Boards of Control.

There being no other business, the Board meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.

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Board Meeting held on March 21, 2013

Chicago, IL

## APPROVED AGENDA

1. Approval of agenda
2. Current conditions & regulation strategy
3. Plans for March 26 teleconference with public
4. Communications Committee activities
  - a) FAQs
  - b) Facebook/social media
  - c) Sharepoint site
5. Other Business
  - a) Gauging Committee report
  - b) Adaptive Management Task Team update
  - c) Update on animation
  - d) Reg Rep MOU
  - e) Kinetic turbines proposal
6. Semi-annual progress report
7. Appearance and upcoming Board events