

MEDIA RELEASE

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IJC expands plan for an Upper Great Lakes study to include the St. Clair River channel

The International Joint Commission's plan for an Upper Great Lakes Study will be revised to include an examination of the St. Clair River channel and its impact on water levels in Lakes Michigan and Huron, the Commission announced today.

The earlier Upper Great Lakes Plan of Study, which was submitted to the governments in 2002, provided a plan to review IJC Orders for Lake Superior outflow regulation and consequently water levels impacts on affected interests in the Upper Great Lakes system from Lake Superior downstream through Lake Erie.

In the past year, evidence suggesting that ongoing physical changes in the upper St. Clair River may be causing important water level changes in Lakes Michigan and Huron has come to light, notably in the report by W.F. Baird & Associates, "Regime Change (Man Made Intervention) and Ongoing Erosion in the St. Clair River and Impacts on Lake Michigan-Huron Lake Levels", which was commissioned by the Georgian Bay Association. The Commission decided to revise its Upper Great Lakes Plan of Study to investigate this issue after it consulted with its Great Lakes Control Boards and discussed it at a bi-national, experts meeting hosted by Environment Canada in Burlington in March of this year.

The revision will also take account of lessons learned from the IJC's US\$20 million Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence Study of the regulation of Lake Ontario and the International Section of the St. Lawrence River - lessons which, among other things, might translate into opportunities to reduce the cost of the Upper Lakes Study. The LOS wraps up this fall (see www.losl.org for more information).

The IJC will appoint a bi-national team of experts that will start work immediately. After holding public consultations, the team will submit the plan of study to the International Joint Commission in October, 2005.

The two federal governments will be requested to provide the necessary funding for the study.

For more information on the background of the Study, visit www.ijc.org (Boards > Completed Task Forces > Upper Great Lakes Plan of Study Team) or http://www.ijc.org/conseil_board/upper_greatlakes/en/upper_home_accueil.htm.

The International Joint Commission prevents and resolves disputes between the United States of America and Canada under the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty and pursues the common good of both countries as an independent and objective advisor to the two governments.

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