Welcome and introductions

The US Chair, Mr. Stephen Durrett, opened the meeting at 8:00 am (EDT) with a roll-call and introductory remarks. The meeting only consisted of Board members, Secretaries, and IJC advisors until 10:00am to discuss process potential process improvements on how the Board responds during extreme events. The remainder of the attendees joined the meeting at 10:15 am,
at the start of the Current Conditions and Regulation Overview. Upon his arrival, LTC Czekanski announced he will be departing from the USACE Buffalo District and will be replaced by LTC Jason Toth moving forward.

2 Overview of Questionnaire and Responses

The Board was distributed a questionnaire to give them an opportunity to identify strengths and areas that may require improvement when making regulatory decisions under extreme conditions, and communicating to the public, stakeholders, and government officials.

3 Discuss Member Concerns and Identify Solutions

Board members discussed many topics including:

- Develop a map or list of key stakeholders to communicate with during times of crisis to enable better understanding of “on-the-ground” conditions throughout the basin.
- Daily briefings provided by the Canadian regulation representatives were essential for Board members to communicate information when approached by the public, media, government officials or others.
- The Regulation Representatives should compile a listing of URLs where members can also obtain daily updated information.
- The Regulation Representatives should re-circulate an updated Operations Advisory Group information package to members.
- Conference calls regarding outflow decisions should be limited to Board members and direct supporting staff.
- Communication with external audiences is essential, especially when deviation authority is limited.
- Board needs further and continued education from Regulation Representatives about how the regulation plan operates including plan flow, rule curve, limits, etc.
- Establish a location for emergency in-person meetings during extreme events to facilitate better communication.
- Secretaries to schedule full-day semi-annual board meetings to provide more time for discussion and planning.
- An overview or “101” of how to interpret regulation products such as the weekly regulation sheet will assist newer board members in independently seeking out information.
• During extreme events, the Board should be careful not to impose on existing agency structures that deal with emergency response. The Board should not venture into a local agency’s area of responsibility.
• The Board would like to gain a better understanding what the St. Lawrence Seaway means to the economy of NY State and other geographic regions to assist with decision making.
• The Board needs to be conscious that when deviating from the regulation plan they may be encroaching on external agencies’ approval of the plan.
• In general, enhanced information regarding tradeoffs when making outflow decision would be beneficial.
• Board would like clarification of Article VIII of the Boundary Waters Treaty from the IJC to better understand what actions are possible under major deviation authority.
• In future decisions, some Board members may need to remove themselves from decision making if a conflict of interest or deviations in opinions may exist. Information to make decisions may need to come from advisory groups rather than members.
• Additional agency resources may be needed during extreme events to assist with organizing meetings and information to ensure Board members are prepared.
• Board acknowledged outward communication needs to be unified and ensure messages are not contradicting, confusing or diluting other messages.
• During emergency calls, Board should state the purpose and objective of the meeting to ensure time is used effectively.
• During emergency calls, Board members should be prepared so information does not have to be redundantly communicated from one call to the next. This will speed up discussions and save the Regulation Representatives considerable time.

**Action item:** Secretaries and Regulation Representatives will evaluate the Board’s comments and prepare solutions to be discussed with Board members at future meetings.

The minutes of the 24 October meeting were approved.

4 **Current Conditions and Regulation Overview**

The US Alternative Regulation Representative presented on hydrologic conditions, including
above-average water levels in the upper Great Lakes, as well as conditions in the Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River system. He then presented an updated forecast of water levels of Lake Ontario to the end of the year indicating the low risk of water levels reaching the Criterion H14 high or low thresholds under very wet or dry basin conditions. He also noted Plan 2104 continues to prescribe very high outflows in response to the high upper Great Lakes water levels, and the last 52 weeks of water supplies. Due to the start of navigation season on March 29th, outflows are currently being maximized in accordance with Plan 2014’s L-limit, which specifies the maximum flow possible while considering safe navigation conditions in the St. Lawrence River. The Canadian Regulation Representative noted that the September to March period was the second wettest since regulation began in 1960.

5 Gauging Committee Update

The Gauging Committee distributed the 79th (2015) and 80th (2016) inspection reports for the Board’s review and approval. The 81st (2017) report is still in progress and will be distributed to the Board for approval once complete. The committee is scheduled to perform the 2018 gauge inspection from 11-17 June.

The committee also discussed the need for the Power Entities to complete a precision survey (especially at OPG’s Saunders generating station due to swelling of concrete near critical gauge stations located at the dam). The survey is required every 10 years, and should be performed in 2018.

- **Action item:** Secretaries will re-distribute the 79th and 80th Gauging Committee reports for the Board’s review. The Board will aim to approve the reports at their April meeting.

- **Action item:** Power Entities to update the Board on the status of the scope of work for the precision survey at the April meeting.

6 Communication Committee Update

a. IWI Proposal for Communications Assessment

The Board discussed the IWI proposal which the Secretaries and IJC staff had prepared to hire a communications professional to assess the effectiveness of the Board’s communication with the public and stakeholders. The IWI funding was approved by the IJC, and a scope of work was
developed so it may be sent out for a request for proposals. The contracting is being handled on
the Canadian side, but the product will assess communication efforts in the US and Canada.

b. Recent/ Upcoming Public Meetings
The Board discussed their attendance to numerous public meetings in both the US and Canada to
explain the high water levels of 2017 were driven by extreme rainfall throughout the basin, the
limitation of any water regulation plan has in controlling extreme water levels, and answer any
questions proposed by local government officials, the public, and other interested entities. The
Board will continue to attend meetings as requested by stakeholders and government officials to
the best of their ability given their limited resources to carry out such communication.

c. Facebook Communication Challenges
The Board discussed recent challenges in managing their Facebook page. The extreme water
levels of 2017 lead to a large increase in public participation which presented many issues such as
dealing with inappropriate comments or “trolling”, providing timely responses to large volumes or
inquiries which, at times, may require detailed technical information, and ensuring a professional
tone is used when communicating and that responses represent the view of all Board members.
The Board will continue to discuss options for handing communication including reducing the
frequency of responding to comments, and explore means of obtaining a dedicated media
professional to manage Facebook and other public communication.

Action item: Co-Chairs to explore if agency resources are available to support the
Board’s communication efforts.

7 GLAM Report Discussion
The GLAM Committee Canadian Co-Chair presented the outline and draft content of the GLAM
Committee’s draft Annual Report for 2017. It was explained the 2017 report is the first report of
many the GLAM will produce every year. The report will document the hydrologic conditions,
regulation activities, hydroclimate, impacts/benefits to the six major interests, and a review of
regulation plan performance. Due to the extreme conditions in the Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence
River system, the GLAM 2017 report will contain a “Lake Ontario – St. Lawrence River Annex”
which will provide more detailed information on the outline topics.
The preliminary draft was submitted to the Boards for their initial review. Preliminary impact
assessment and plan performance data was presented and discussed. It was emphasized the report is not intended to provide an economic assessment of damages that occurred, rather it will document physical impacts in relation to the performance indicators that were used to develop the plan. The GLAM explained they are assessing impacts using different methods such as assessing aerial imagery that was collected during the high water, gathering impact information by speaking with representatives from the St. Lawrence Seaway corporations, the Power Entities, and state or provincial government agencies. The complete report is expected to be submitted to the IJC for approval in October 2018, but the IJC is considering an early release of chapters of the report that describe the hydrologic conditions and regulation activities that occurred during 2017.

The GLAM Co-Chair also presented a draft Circles of Influence strategy to the Board, which will act as a way for the GLAM to collect and share information, and collaborate with key representatives from each of the 6 major interest groups throughout the entire Great Lakes basin. The GLAM Committee is in the process of creating this strategy and developing the key points of contact.

**Action item:** Board members are to provide comments to the GLAM on Sections 2-5 by April 13th and the preliminary impact assessment and plan review sections by May 5th.

8 **Other Business**

a. **ILOSLRB Meeting** – April 24th, Washington DC
b. **IJC Reception** – April 24th, Washington DC
c. **IJC Appearances** – April 25th, Washington DC
d. **GLAM Meeting** – June 26-27, Detroit MI
e. **ILOSLRB Meeting** – September 18, Cornwall ON
f. **Flow Verification** – Regulation representatives and secretary discussed the need for flow verification measurements downstream of the Long Sault dam.

9 **Action Item Review**

- Secretaries and Regulation Representatives will evaluate the Board’s comments and prepare solutions to be discussed with Board members at future meetings.
- Secretaries will re-distribute the 79th and 80th Gauging Committee reports for the Board’s review. The Board will aim to approve the reports at their April meeting.
• Secretaries will draft a letter to the Power Entities to request the status of the scope of work for the precision survey.

• Co-Chairs to explore if agency resources are available to support the Board’s communication efforts.

• Board members are to provide comments to the GLAM on Sections 2-5 by April 13th and on the preliminary impact assessment and plan review sections by May 5th.

10 Closing Remarks and Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.
INTERNATIONAL LAKE ONTARIO - ST. LAWRENCE RIVER BOARD

Board Meeting 29 March 2018 - 8:00 am to 3:00 pm
Embassy Suites Hotel Buffalo/Downtown – Salon Meeting Room
200 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo NY 14202

FINAL AGENDA

1. Roll, Opening Remarks, Objectives, Code of Conduct [Durrett, Bechard] 8:00 am
2. Overview of Questionnaire and Responses [Caldwell, Heer] 8:20 am
   a) Discuss Areas Needing Improvement
3. Discuss Member Concerns and Identify Solutions 8:45 am
5. Gaging Committee Update [Koralewski, Fisher, McNiven] 10:45 am
   a) IWI Communication Proposal
   b) Recent/Upcoming Public Meetings
   c) Facebook Communication Challenges
7. GLAM Report Discussion [Heer, Leger] 1:30 pm
   a) Preliminary Draft Annual Report for 2017
   b) Circles of Influence
8. Other Business [Heer] 2:50 pm
   a) ILOSLRB Meeting: April 24 1-5pm (Hampton Inn, 1729 H St. NW, Washington DC 20006)
   b) IJC Reception: April 24 6pm (2201 C St, NW, Washington DC – DOS Exhibit Hall)
   c) IJC Appearance: Washington DC – April 25
   d) GLAM Meeting June: Detroit, MI TBD
   e) Flow verification at Long Sault Dam
9. Action Item Review [Heer] 2:55 pm
10. Closing Remarks [Durrett] 3:00 pm