



**IJC Science Advisory Board – Science Priority Committee  
Fifty-first Meeting  
Meeting Summary**

**March 11, 2024 – 12:30-2:00pm Eastern Time**

---

<b>U.S. Members</b>	<b>Canadian Members</b>	<b>Commission Staff</b>
Lucinda Johnson (Co-Chair)	Gail Krantzberg (Co-Chair)	Matthew Child (Secretary)
Donna Kashian	John Livernois	Lyne Sabourin
Drew Gronewold	Jerome Marty	Jo Werba
Laura Johnson	Mike McKay	Heather Stirratt
Bob Sterner	Karen Kidd	Li Wang
Margaret Noodin	Maggie Xenopoulos	Rachel Wyatt
		Rajendra Poudel
		Mark Burrows

---

Regrets: Nandita Basu

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The Canadian Co-Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and round table introductions were completed. The January 5, 2024 meeting record was acknowledged. The meeting agenda was approved by consensus.

**2. Status of Other Board Projects that have SPC Participation**

WQB Great Lakes Horizons (Lucinda Johnson)

The first phase of the project analyzed four scenarios outlining different possible futures for the Great Lakes region based on underlying drivers, trends and trajectories. A report has been completed and the current phase of the project is focused on developing tools (i.e., video script, storyboard, etc.) to communicate project findings. Draft materials have been prepared by the contractor, which are under review by the work group.

WQB Climate Adaptation (Jerome Marty)

The project will develop a toolkit for small and medium-sized communities and is designed to be complementary to other resources. Best practices and successful approaches will be emphasized. The contractor has developed a draft report, which is currently being reviewed by the work group. Gail and Lucinda requested that they be circulated the draft report, since the topic overlaps with projects they are involved in.

#### HPAB Fish Consumption (Karen Kidd)

The project was initiated in 2020 and focuses on fish consumption advisories in the St. Lawrence River Area of Concern, and the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne in particular. Two workshops have been held and workshop reports have been prepared. A final project report is nearing completion. In response to a question, it was clarified that an Akwesasne member has been involved in the project, and several community members participated in the project workshops.

#### HPAB Microbial Study (Mike McKay)

The project is inspired by an early-1900s IJC assessment of microbial pollution across the transboundary, including the Great Lakes. The first phase of the project assessed approaches to apply modern molecular and genomics methods including microbial source tracking, harmful algal blooms and metagenomics. The second phase of the project is underway, and will identify a long-term microbial monitoring program, community-of-practice, and conduct inter-lab surveys to support the identification of an approach to a pilot study. A Phase 2 contractor was recently selected, and the work group is being assembled. A related session is planned for IAGLR 2024.

### **3. Work Plans**

Members were reminded about the work plan guidance and format documents that were circulated with the agenda packet. Standardized work plans and submission deadlines for all advisory boards will be observed moving forward. Although the IJC supports Board work plans through both the U.S. and Canadian funding systems, the aim is to have work plans approved by spring, request-for-proposals developed by mid-summer, and contractors confirmed by the end of September.

#### Greenhouse Impacts on Lake Erie Eutrophication (Mike McKay)

The greenhouse sector is a large industry concentrated in southwestern Ontario, and is also growing in some Great Lakes states. Greenhouse impacts on water quality are becoming better understood, and the recent call for applications for ECCC's Freshwater Ecosystem Initiative included a funding category on Lake Erie eutrophication. The IJC's Science Advisory Board could consider establishing a work group to assess the state of the science. In the discussion that followed there was general agreement that improving our understanding of the impact of the greenhouse sector on water quality is a science gap that needs to be filled, and there are emerging techniques that could be explored e.g., plant viruses as a potential greenhouse source trackdown. There is precedent for IJC's advisory boards to undertake a project that addresses a single industry. If the Board moves forward with a work plan, it would be for the 2025/26 funding cycle.

#### Great Lakes Early Warning System (GLEWS) Pilot Project (Lucinda Johnson)

The draft GLEWS Pilot Project work plan that was circulated with the meeting agenda packet was reviewed. The work plan proposes to apply the GLEWS decision framework to two case studies (nitrogen and waterborne anti-microbial resistance). Each case study would be advanced by task teams, and an independent reviewer(s) would provide an unbiased assessment of how well the process and steps of the GLEWS framework worked. The work plan will be submitted for the 2024/25 funding cycle. Members were asked to send any comments on the draft work plan by March 14, 2024.

## Ecosystem Services Valuation (Phase 2) (John Livernois)

The Phase 1 project report will be finalized by the work group in the coming weeks. A Phase 2 study will be recommended, and a work plan could be developed for the 2025/26 funding cycle that focuses on coastal wetlands' nutrients sequestration function. Two wetlands would be selected – one in Canada and one in the U.S. – that are proximal to a eutrophic area and have the potential for restoration. The Phase 2 tasks would include characterizing the link between changes in the wetlands and impacts on nutrients loadings, characterizing the link between eutrophication changes and defined ecosystem services, and estimating the value of changes in those defined ecosystem services. In response to questions, it was clarified that although only two wetlands would be examined, adding additional wetlands to the sample size would be very expensive and may not contribute commensurately to an estimation of the value of defined ecosystem services. For each wetland examined, focus groups will be convened to generate the content of structured interviews, and the number of interviews (i.e., sample size) will need to be carefully considered. It was also clarified that the project will not attempt to incorporate an Indigenous perspective of 'value'; the work group discussed this at length and felt that would need to be a separate project to do it justice.

### **4. Other Strategic Priorities**

#### Membership

Commissioners have directed that the IJC recruit advisory board members through an open process. A public call for self-nominations will be issued in the coming weeks, and existing SAB members are encouraged to circulate the call with their networks. Through discussion it was noted that the SAB had good success with a public call for nominations in 2019, and existing Board members will need to promote and advance the forthcoming public call to get good candidates to apply.

**Action:** SPC members are requested to identify professional associations and societies that the public call for Board nominations can be sent to.

### **5. Spring Semi-Annual Meeting**

Spring Semi-Annual meeting logistics were reviewed. In response to a question, it was noted that Indigenous cultural training is confirmed for April 9 from 1:15-4:15 p.m. A registration link will be circulated in the coming days.

Members discussed potential agenda items for the April 10 SPC and SAB meetings. There was general agreement that substantial time should be dedicated to discussing the Great Lakes Science Plan, in lieu of a guest speaker. Discussions should also include improved engagement with Early Career Researchers and improving knowledge transfer of Board outputs.

Commissioners are directing that all Boards allot 20 minutes for Board presentations. The remainder of the Board appearance should focus on in-depth and strategic discussions on key issues and challenges. In particular, the Commission is interested in feedback from the Board on recent and planned communications activities and ideas to assist Boards with their public engagement activities.

## **6. Other Business & Adjournment**

Due to Li Wang's retirement in summer 2024, the SAB-RCC Secretarial duties will shift over to John Wilson following the Spring Semi-Annual meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

*Meeting record prepared by Matthew Child and reviewed by Lucinda Johnson and Gail Krantzberg.  
Please forward any errors or omissions to [matthew.child@ijc.org](mailto:matthew.child@ijc.org)*