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THOMAS F. O'MARA
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58TH DISTRICT
August 27, 2013

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Honorable Lana Pollack, Chair
United States Section
International Joint Commission
2000 L Street, NW, Suite #615
Washington, DC 20440

Dear Chair Pollack:

I appreciate this opportunity to directly share my ongoing concerns regarding the International Joint Commission's "Plan 2014" and its impact along the southern and eastern shores of Lake Ontario and across the Great Lakes Basin.

In particular I would like to reiterate my strong opposition to the IJC's "Proposal for Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River Regulation," which would implement dramatic, far-reaching and potentially devastating changes to the regulation of Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River water levels. The proposed changes, if ultimately implemented, would have a detrimental impact on local property taxpayers, local businesses and, overall, local and statewide economies.

Among my deepest concerns is that the implementation of Plan 2014 would fail to adequately control high or low water levels. Sustained high-water levels along Lake Ontario would leave many shoreline areas open to increased erosion damage as well as pose a severe threat to local sewer systems, roadways, parks and businesses in low-lying communities. Similarly crippling consequences would result from the plan's proposals for low-water levels. My family has owned and maintained a cottage on Ramona Beach, on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario, for the past three decades. I can personally attest to the erosion and property damage which occur during even brief periods of high water, and the negative impact to recreational boat access and the resulting loss of economic activity during low water periods.

Recently, as you know, the Inter-County Association of Western New York -- which represents 19 counties including each of the five counties (Chemung, Schuyler, Steuben, Tompkins and Yates) comprising my 58th Senatorial District -- formally expressed its opposition to Plan 2014's provisions for managing Lake Ontario, citing the serious and direct economic and

environmental impacts of the current proposal on numerous shoreline communities, as well as throughout the New York State Great Lakes Basin.

I fully share these concerns and urge your reconsideration and reexamination of the impact of Plan 2014, as currently proposed, including: 1.) the potential for direct shoreline erosion and other property damage and environmental destruction for Lake Ontario's lakeshore residents and communities; 2.) the effect on recreational fishing and other water sports throughout the basin, including the Finger Lakes Region, not the least of which would be a significant loss of revenue and other negative consequences for these vital tourism-related industries; 3.) the inherent risks posed for sewage and other contaminant inflows resulting from the proposed water level changes; and, 4.) the provision of mitigation funds for the resulting losses to those residents, businesses and communities negatively impact by the plan's implementation.

In short, I can't do enough to encourage the IJC to heed the chorus of opposition to Plan 2014 arising from landowners, community leaders, state and federal officials, county legislatures and concerned citizens from throughout the Great Lakes Basin.

Our concerns are legitimate, the consequences and risks we fear are real, and we hope that the points we continue to raise will be given every careful consideration. For example, serious questions have been raised over the IJC's failure to accurately assess the plan's impact along the southern shore of Lake Ontario, both in terms of the anticipated costs for the affected communities nor the damage to the region's public infrastructure. Additionally, the plan's scientific shortcomings have been criticized by credible environmental scientists, including those convened as part of a special panel by the National Research Council.

As always, thank you for your attention to these comments. If I can provide additional input or answer any questions, please contact me. It would be my pleasure to do so.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom F. O'Mara". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Thomas F. O'Mara
New York State Senator, 58th District

cc: Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor