

OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION

We regret the need to be openly critical of the International Joint Commission and the various boards/working groups involved with water level Plan BV7.

We shall start by saying that, in our opinion, you are all very bad at your jobs.

After \$20,000,000.00 spent between 2000-2006 and untold millions since, you are trying to force-feed the property owners along the south shore of Lake Ontario a plan that is even more damaging than the plan, known as Plan B+, that was not approved a few years ago.

You expect us to swallow between \$4 and \$5 million dollars in annual damages, the vast majority to occur in the United States, in New York State and on Lake Ontario. Those are your figures, not ours. Our figures would reflect damages from three or more times higher than your \$4.5 million yearly average.

If BV7 is the best plan you can formulate, then perhaps you should all step down and let someone else have a crack at it- someone who can be more objective, or someone who is willing to treat all parties equally.

Not only are you bad at your jobs, but you also insult, demean and disregard us. Where are the commissioners at these informational meetings? Why isn't the water-level issue important enough for them to hear our concerns first-hand? Why are we not talking directly to the BV7 decision-makers?

Aren't our homes, our sewer and water systems, our tax base, our communities, our way of life, our property values, important enough to have the Commissioners hear our side of the issue first-hand?

The IJC Commissioners and their staffs are not royalty. You are public servants. The absence of the Commissioners speaks volumes!

On a path to ethical bankruptcy, your working groups are attempting to remove the promise of damage mitigation by saying that the grossly underestimated \$4.5 million in annual BV7 damages is not damage at all, but rather a "reduction in benefits" that the system has provided to south shore riparians over the years.

This "slight of hand" would be similar to saying that, as you have had ten fingers your whole life, cutting off three of them would not be a problem, but just a reduction in the benefits of that having ten fingers provides.

It is notable that other interest groups, who will feel no pain from this plan, have seen much larger benefits from regulation than have south shore riparians and will receive even greater benefits under this plan. You cannot produce power without a dam and you cannot sell that power at cut-rate prices to keep businesses open and employ people in the North Country without the dam and regulated water levels. It is essential to observe the benefit that the Great Lakes shipping industry and its employees, steel mills, grain producers and manufacturing plants have received from regulated water levels.

Extremism is present when one group perceives their interests to be so important that hurting another group is, not only acceptable, but even a part of the plan. Plan BV7 has been crafted by environmental extremists who appear to have reeled in the IJC, hook, line and sinker. They are proposing a solution that may not work, to a problem that may not exist. They appear to pronounce that anyone who does not support Plan BV7 is an enemy of the environment in need of a dose of "benefit reduction" as punishment!

It might take an average eighth grader only an hour or so on Google to find enough contradiction within environmental points purporting to support Plan BV7 make one question their accuracy..

The IJC's own experts initially said high water helped the wetlands, yet now they are positive that low water is the answer. Such contradictions do not in gender confidence.

BV7 is claimed to help the Muskrat population by increasing it by nearly 300%, yet one might observe that the DEC has a no bag limit on muskrat trapping. With a license, one can trap as many as one wants. In fact, a DEC employee was quoted earlier this year in the Watertown Daily News as saying, "...the nice thing about them (muskrats) is that they are easy to catch and there are plenty of them." Is it water levels or over-hunting that is the problem? Also, the cattails so many feel the need to eliminate are a primary source of food to muskrats.

BV7 is supposed to help solve the declining population problem of the Black Tern. Googling that problem, one may find that the Black Terns declining population in New York is actually a shifting of their migration pattern in North America. Regulated water levels are mentioned as a possible reason, but no more clearly than recreational boat wakes causing Black Tern nests to be destroyed.

Environmentalists claim that 64,000 acres of wetlands have been lost by the current regulation plan. Yet, one might ask how many acres of new wetlands were created when the dam flooded vast sections of the St. Lawrence River Valley. Maybe we haven't lost any wetlands at all. May be there has just been a reduction in wetland benefits. Now one must ask how many miles of shoreline, both private and public, will be lost under BV7.

None of the environmentalists are saying anything about the St Lawrence River EPA Superfund sites caused by Alcoa, General Motors and Reynolds Aluminum. Not much has been said about the PCBs, Dioxins, Mirex and Mercury coming into the lake from the Black River, Oswego River and Genesee River. Indeed, 85% of our water supply from the Niagara River flows past the Love Canal and the old Hooker chemical sites. It might be that the radioactive materials leaking into the lake from nuclear waste sites near Toronto are the reasons that people are catching less Northern Pike? We do not claim to be experts, but all this pollution might be having a negative effect on fish, wildlife and wetlands.

Amidst all such contention, what do we want you to do?

We want you to keep your promises of a balanced approach, with no disproportional damages and no unmitigated damages. A balanced approach is not a plan that places 95% of the damages in the United States, in New York State and on Lake Ontario's south shore.

We want the IJC to stop letting extreme environmentalism rule this process. We want the IJC to stop fostering an atmosphere that pits interest groups against one another.

We want you to go back to a transparent process that includes representation from among property owners along on Lake Ontario's shores ponds and bays, recreational boaters and businesses.

Unlike some, we do not want any interest to be damaged. We want to live, work and play in, on and along the lake and river that is safe, healthy and preserved for future generations.

The role of government should not be to harm the very citizens it is charged to protect.
WE WANT YOU TO COME BACK TO US WITH A PLAN THAT HURTS NO ONE!