

# LEVELER

E-Newsletter from the Lake Ontario Riparian Alliance

Issue 41

December 22, 2014

Grassroots Public Advocacy for the Protection, Restoration and Conservation of Lake Ontario  
Beaches and Riparian Property

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## South Shore County Representatives Blast Support 2014 Coalition and Nature Conservancy

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For Immediate Release:

Monday, December 22, 2014

### **BROOKS & COUNTY LEADERS SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT: “PLAN 2014” FAILS TO PROTECT PROPERTY OWNERS & PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE**

*Recent ads from environmental lobby misrepresent true dangers of “Plan 2014”*

Monroe County Executive **Maggie Brooks** was today joined by County leaders and representatives from the six contiguous counties representing the southern shore of Lake Ontario to refute recent claims made by the “Support Plan 2014” Coalition and Nature Conservancy about International Joint Commission (IJC) Plan 2014. The plan is a departure from the Lake’s current 4-foot regulatory range, which has been in effect for over 50 years, and instead allow for a greater variation that could lead to significant public and private property damage.

*“The only special interest group I hold myself accountable to is the local taxpayers,” said **Brooks**. “Homeowners and businesses along the south shore of Lake Ontario have invested a great deal into protecting their properties against 50 years of fairly steady lake levels. Under Plan 2014, higher levels could leave our lakeshore susceptible to significant flooding and increased erosion, resulting in millions of dollars in damages to both private properties and public infrastructure, with no recourse for compensation.”*

The “Support Plan 2014” Coalition has claimed that shoreline property owners face no significant additional threat from the proposed new water management plan. That claim is directly refuted by the IJC which estimates Plan 2014 will increase the annual cost of shoreline protection by 13% and increase annual damages by \$2.2 million; a number that is considered low by many experts because it does not account for losses by local businesses and damages to bays and inlets.

*“As the voice of residents on the southern shore of Lake Ontario and representatives elected by the taxpayers of our respected counties, our joint-opposition to Plan 2014 should not take a back seat to the opinions of well financed special interest groups. Whatever environmental benefits may accrue in some parts of the lakeshore, Wayne County property owners on Lake Ontario and its embayments will suffer increased damages due to more frequent flooding and higher lake levels,”* said Wayne County Board of Supervisors Chairman **Jim Hoffman**.

The Village of Sodus Point stands among the hardest to be hit if Plan 2014 is implemented. The low-lying village has been endangered by past high water levels and Plan 2014’s call for more frequent and sometimes higher water levels only furthers the risk for damages.

“Plan 2014 offers three very devastating affects to the residents of Sodus Point. Erosion, flooding of homes and businesses, infiltration of surface water into wastewater lift stations forcing the shutdown of the water system, making Sodus Point 75% uninhabitable and devaluation of property values,” said Village of Sodus Point Mayor **Chris Tertinek**.

The Niagara Orleans Regional Alliance (NORA) is a collaborative partnership between Niagara and Orleans Counties to identify and capitalize on common ideas, experiences, and opportunities for the betterment of its citizens. The organization has been a staunch opponent of Plan 2014 and has brought attention to the devastating economic impact the plan would have on the surrounding area.

*“The devastation caused by Plan 2014 will not stop at the shoreline; every taxpayer in our counties will pay the price! As the proposed higher lake levels erode our shorelines, property values will depreciate resulting in high property taxes for everyone. Conversely, as the proposed lower lake levels drain our harbors, the loss of sales tax revenues from sport fishing and recreational boating will have to be made up by another property tax increase. Plan 2014 is an economic disaster that has to be sunk once and for all,”* said Niagara County Legislator **David E. Godfrey**, who also serves as Co-Chair of NORA.

*“The role of government should not be to harm the very citizens it is charged to protect. Here we have two federal agencies, the US Army Corps of Engineers who recently spent millions of dollars to dredge our local harbors, and on the other hand we have a federally commissioned agency, the International Joint Commission, supporting Plan 2014 that will result in damages exceeding \$3.5 million to our counties shorelines. This is government at its worst,”* said Orleans County Legislature Vice-Chair **Lynne M. Johnson**, who also serves as Co-Chair of NORA.

Oswego and Cayuga Counties represent the southeastern shore of Lake Ontario and have a combined 57 mile of at risk shoreline. Both counties have concerns about how the fluctuations in lake levels would affect the tourism, fishing, and boating industries.

*“For nearly a decade now, the Oswego County Legislature has watched, listened, studied and offered comments as the plans to change the levels of Lake Ontario have been proposed. While there have been numerous variations of the proposal, none have provided an objective and all inclusive analysis of the potential economic damages on tourism, recreation, business and residences along the southern and eastern shores of Lake Ontario and its tributaries. We have specifically requested that the Commission also assess the amount of civil work and financial assistance required to mitigate the damage of any future plans and identify funding sources available to offset those damages. To date, the Commission has failed to respond to our communications. Oswego County remains opposed to the adoption of any plan that does not contain a mechanism to assess the damages to the nearly 42 miles of shoreline within Oswego County, or provide a funding source to compensate our public and private property owners for their eventual losses,”* said Oswego County Legislature Chairman **Kevin Gardner**.

*“The region must stand together on any changes to water levels, considering the impact on property and commerce far into the future,”* said Cayuga County Legislature Chairman **Michael Chapman**.

Plan 2014 was announced as the preferred option for regulating water levels and flows by the IJC in June 2014 despite heavy opposition from the communities along the southern and eastern shores of Lake Ontario. Before the plan can be implemented, it must be approved by Secretary of State John F. Kerry. All six counties have passed resolutions in opposition to Plan 2014 and leaders from each of the respected counties have written Secretary Kerry to voice their concerns.

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*Media Inquiries, contact:  
Department of Communications at 753-1080*

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**It is time for you to call your representatives  
and express your concern against Plan 2014.**

**Here is the Contact Information for our Elected Federal Representatives:**

**Congressman Hanna** (East Side of Oswego River to the Oswego/Jefferson County Line)

Local Office Telephone # 315-724-9740

Washington DC Telephone # 202-225-3665

**Address:**

258 Genesee St.  
Utica, NY 13502

**Email:** <https://hanna.house.gov/email-me/>

**Congressman Maffei** (West side of Oswego River to Williamson)

**Incoming Congressman John Katko**

Syracuse Office Telephone # 315-423-5657

Oswego Office Telephone # 315-342-2192

**Addresses:**

**Syracuse Office**

1 Clinton Square 2nd Floor  
Syracuse, New York 13202

**Oswego Office**

100 North Salina Road 13 West Oneida St.  
Oswego, New York 13126

**Email:** [Bryan.Maxwell@mail.house.gov](mailto:Bryan.Maxwell@mail.house.gov)

**Congresswoman Slaughter** (Monroe County)

Local Office Telephone #585-232-4850

Washington DC Telephone #202- 225-3615

**Address:**

3120 Federal Building  
100 State Street  
Rochester, NY 14614

**Email:** [katie.lashomb@mail.house.gov](mailto:katie.lashomb@mail.house.gov)

**Congressman Collins** (West of Monroe County to Niagara River)

Local Office Telephone # 716-634-2324

Washington DC Telephone # 202-225-5265

**Address:**

2813 Wehrle Drive  
Suite 13  
Williamsville, NY 14221

**Email:** [Michael.Kracker@mail.house.gov](mailto:Michael.Kracker@mail.house.gov)

**Senator Schumer**

**Addresses:**

**Washington D.C. Office**

322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510  
Phone: 202-224-6542  
Fax: 202-228-3027

**Buffalo Office**

130 South Elmwood Avenue  
#660  
Buffalo, NY 14202

Phone: 716-846-4111  
Fax: 716-846-4113

**Rochester Office**

100 State Street, Room 3040  
Rochester, NY 14614  
Phone: 585-263-5866  
Fax: 585-263-3173

**Email:** [Chris.Zeltmann@schumer.senate.gov](mailto:Chris.Zeltmann@schumer.senate.gov)

**Syracuse Office**

100 South Clinton Street  
Room 841  
Syracuse, NY 13261-7318  
Phone: 315-423-5471  
Fax: 315-423-5185

**Senator Gillibrand**

**Addresses**

**Washington, DC Office**

478 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel. (202) 224-4451  
Fax (202) 228-0282

**Buffalo Office**

726 Exchange Street, Suite 511  
Buffalo, NY 14210  
Tel. (716) 854-9725  
Fax (716) 854-973

**Email:** [sarah\\_clark@gillibrand.senate.gov](mailto:sarah_clark@gillibrand.senate.gov)

**Rochester Office**

Kenneth B. Keating Federal Office Building  
100 State Street  
Room 4195  
Rochester, NY 14614  
Tel. (585) 263-6250  
Fax (585) 263-6247

**Syracuse/Central NY**

James M. Hanley Federal Building  
100 South Clinton Street  
Room 1470  
PO Box 7378  
Syracuse, NY 13261  
Tel. (315) 448-0470  
Fax (315) 448-0476

**The United States Secretary of State**

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

**We need everyone on the South Shore to call our representatives and express our outrage about Plan 2014!**

For more information: <http://www.loranet.org/>

Past Newsletters: <http://www.loranet.org/levelerarchive/pastissues.htm>