



January 12, 2012

Joseph Comuzzi, Chair
International Joint Commission
Canadian Section
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Lana Pollack, Chair
International Joint Commission
U.S. Section
2000 L Street, NW
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Re: Conservation Ontario's Support for a Coordinated Adaptive Management Approach

Dear: Mr. Comuzzi and Ms. Pollack:

Conservation Ontario (CO) is the network of 36 Ontario Conservation Authorities (CAs), which are science-based watershed/shoreline management agencies. At the December 5th meeting of Conservation Ontario Council, a staff report was considered on the International Upper Great Lakes Study (IUGLS) and the proposed Adaptive Management Strategy. Presentations were provided by Dr. Jim Bruce, member of the IUGLS Board and Co-Chair of the Public Interest Advisory Group, and Wendy Leger, Canadian Lead for the Adaptive Management Group. The presentations were on the IUGLS highlights and the proposed adaptive management strategy respectively. At the same meeting, per the attached resolution, Conservation Ontario Council endorsed the establishment of a water quantity advisory board and offered its support to the IJC and the IUGL Study Board by committing to identify a representative to sit on the board, once it is established.

Conservation Authorities are responsible for issuing permissions for shoreline development activities and have a vested interest in participating in an adaptive management approach to great lakes shoreline management. Adaptive management is the only practical way to develop understanding of the factors, drivers and impacts of a changing climate. The adaptive management approach focuses on vulnerabilities such as shoreline flooding and low water levels which are core to Conservation Authority watershed/shoreline management activities. Conservation Ontario looks forward to working with the IJC on a coordinated adaptive management approach that is responsive to the needs of Conservation Authorities as shoreline and watershed managers.

Conservation Ontario applauds the International Joint Commission for its leadership in advancing the state of knowledge of adaptive management through its outreach campaign under the International Upper Great Lakes Study, and their recognition of the need to coordinate its adaptive management efforts with the Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River (LOSLR) Working Group. Conservation Ontario recognizes the importance of a coordinated approach to adaptive management that supports tracking and understanding of climate related changes particularly around vulnerabilities such as shoreline flooding and low water levels. Conservation Ontario therefore offers its support for the development of a water quantity advisory board that would advise the IJC and its Boards of Control regarding adaptively managing for extremes in levels and flow fluctuations. This advice would necessarily be premised upon maintenance and sharing of critical information on hydroclimate, water level changes and other decision support tools for adaptive management, and coordination with agencies with more local decision-making responsibilities. Again, through the attached resolution, Conservation Ontario has also committed to identifying a representative to participate on such an advisory board and to facilitate coordination. Should you have any questions about this letter, please feel free to contact me at 905-895-0716 or Bonnie Fox, Manager, Policy & Planning at ext 223.

On a personal note let me express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the Public Interest Advisory Group associated with the IUGLS. It has been a tremendous learning opportunity as well as a privilege to meet and work with some truly amazing people.

Sincerely,



Dick Hibma
Chair of Conservation Ontario

Attachment:

Conservation Ontario Council Resolution #35/11:

THAT Conservation Ontario, representing the network of 36 Ontario Conservation Authorities, applaud the International Joint Commission (IJC) for its leadership in advancing the state of knowledge of adaptive management through its outreach campaign under the International Upper Great Lakes (IUGL) Study and their recognition of the need to coordinate its adaptive management efforts with the Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River (LOSLR) Working Group and with the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement;

AND FURTHER THAT Conservation Ontario, as a network of science-based watershed/shoreline management agencies, affirm the importance of a coordinated approach to adaptive management that supports tracking and understanding of changes in the physical system as they affect vulnerabilities such as shoreline flooding and low water levels;

AND FURTHER THAT Conservation Ontario offer its support to the IJC and the IUGL Study Board with regard to the establishment of a water quantity advisory board that would advise the IJC and its Boards of Control regarding adaptively managing for extremes in levels and flows fluctuations and to provide a more coordinated approach to adaptive management that recognizes the full range of benefits of adaptive management;

AND FURTHER THAT this Board support the development and maintenance of critical information on hydroclimate, water levels changes and other decision support tools for adaptive management in a manner that is responsive to the needs of the Conservation Authorities;

AND FINALLY THAT Conservation Ontario offer to identify a representative to sit on the Advisory Board in support of this initiative and to facilitate coordination