

Title: Experts Call for New Great Lakes Agreement on Treaty's 100th (Anniversary)
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Full Text:

HAMILTON, ONTARIO, Jun 8, 2009 (Marketwire via COMTEX) -- A cross-border group of 38 leading [Great Lakes](#) and St. Lawrence River experts is urging the U.S. and Canadian federal governments to use this week's 100th anniversary celebrations of the Boundary Waters Treaty in Niagara Falls, Ontario to roll-up their sleeves, get down to work and re-negotiate an outdated Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

"While officials should be commended for making strides in Great Lakes protection and restoration, the job is not even close to being done," said Gail Krantzberg, director of the Centre for Engineering and Public Policy at McMaster University. "We urge the Canadian and U.S. governments to take this watershed opportunity amidst this great and historic celebratory time to demonstrate true leadership for the Great Lakes St. Lawrence by committing once-and-for-all to renegotiating the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement."

Boundary Waters Week runs this week and celebrates 100 years of cooperation between Canada and the United States in managing the two nations' shared waters. Events throughout the week culminate June 13 with the official centennial celebration in Niagara Falls with Commissioners from the International Joint Commission, the mayors of Niagara Falls Ontario and New York, and local senior politicians.

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin is one of the largest economic units in the world. However, the Great Lakes St. Lawrence ecosystem currently faces more severe threats than ever before and the majority of these threats require united action simultaneously from Canada and the United States. Problems facing the Great Lakes St. Lawrence include: alien invasive species, toxic chemicals, climate change, air pollution, habitat loss, drinking water quality, and excessive nutrients.

A recent report released by Krantzberg and Jack Manno (SUNY) concluded that the chronic and historic questions of responsibility, leadership and accountability remain as important as how many dollars governments promise for the binational Great Lakes. The prospects for a healthy Great Lakes in the 21st century would be substantially improved by updating and negotiating a new water quality agreement under the historic 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty.

"Those who work to regulate, improve, protect and restore the world's largest body of freshwater cannot be expected to succeed using outdated tools," said coalition member John Jackson, program director, Great Lakes United. "Using the 37 year-old Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement is like expecting hybrid performance and efficiency from a 1972 clunker."

In 2007 the governments of Canada and the United States undertook a binational review of the agreement. Under pressure from those outside of government, the process went public. The response was overwhelming: update the agreement to include modern management principles like accountability and the precautionary approach; principles that are effectively employed elsewhere to manage other shared water bodies.

Despite this mandate from the public, for two years neither government has responded on what will come of the review. The undersigned groups are certain that a new water quality agreement for a new century is essential.

Signatories

Dr. Gail Krantzberg, McMaster University, Ontario

John Jackson, Great Lakes United, binational

Dr. David Schindler, University of Alberta

Rosanne W. Fortner, Ohio Sea Grant Education Program

Sandy Bihn, Western Lake Erie Waterkeeper Association

Maureen Carter-Whitney, LL.B. LL.M., Research Director, Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy, Ontario

Dr. Jeffrey S. Farrah, Oakland Community College, Michigan

Dr. Carol A. Stepien, University of Toledo, Ohio

Kevin McMahon, Director, Waterlife, Primitive Entertainment, Ontario

Kristy Meyer, Ohio Environmental Council

Dr. Greg Boyer, Director, Great Lakes Research Consortium, New York

Douglas Markoff, Mississauga, Ontario

Dr. Don Scavia, University of Michigan

Dr. George Francis, University of Waterloo, Ontario

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Doug M. Bondy, McGregor, ON

Dr. Grenetta Thomassey, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, Michigan

Karen Kraft Sloan, Former Canadian Ambassador for the Environment, Ontario

Anastasia Lintner, Elaine McDonald, Ecojustice (formerly Sierra Legal Defence Fund), Ontario

Theresa McClenaghan, Canadian Environmental Law Association, Ontario

Ken Schmidt, Essex Region Conservation Authority, Ontario

Cheryl Mendoza, Policy and Network Specialist, Freshwater Future, Michigan

Marc Hudon, Nature Quebec

Fabio Tonto, MEPP, Pollution Probe, Ontario

Captain Rich Greenwood, Great Sailing-Great Partners-Great Lakes: Come Sail Away Charters, LLC, St. Joseph, Michigan

F. Ned Dikmen, Publisher, Great Lakes Boating Magazine, Chairman, Great Lakes Boating Federation, Illinois

Ed Houghton, Town of Collingwood, Ontario

Andy Knott, Executive Director, The Watershed Center of Grand Traverse Bay, Traverse City, Michigan

Dr. Jon MacDonagh-Dumler, Institute for Water Research, Michigan State University.

Tom Muir, Environment Canada - Retired, Burlington, Ontario.

Kathy Evans, Director, Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership

Kevin Mercer, RiverSides Foundation, Toronto

Cynthia Price, Chair, Muskegon Lake Watershed Partnership

Dr. John Zekas MD, University Heights, Ohio

Oliver Brandes, POLIS Project on Ecological Governance -- University of Victoria, B.C.

Bob Sandford, Canadian Partnership Initiative of the United Nations 'Water for Life' Decade, Canada

Erick Lafleur, Les Amis de la Terre de Quebec

M. Andre Stainier, president, Les Amis de la Vallee du Saint-Laurent

The report of Krantzberg and Manno can be found at

<http://msepmcmaster.ca/publications/GreatLakesGovernanceWorkshopReport.pdf>

SOURCE: Great Lakes United

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