

Date

Dear _____,

I am writing to you today as the owner of _____, a recreational boating industry business that has been negatively impacted by dangerously high-water levels along the Great Lakes & St Lawrence River. Water level management falls under the jurisdiction of the International Joint Commission (IJC), a politically appointed board of commissioners whose job it is to take into account the needs of a wide range of water uses, including drinking water, commercial shipping, hydroelectric power generation, agriculture, ecosystem health, industry, fishing, recreational boating and shoreline property.

As part of their water management work, the IJC has approved Plan 2014 and claims it is designed to provide for more natural variations of water levels in Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Plan 2014 deems this as needed to:

- restore ecosystem health;
- moderate extreme high and low levels;
- better maintain system-wide levels for navigation;
- extend the recreational boating season and slightly increase hydropower production.

The main element of Plan 2014 is the High-Water Trigger Levels that must be reached before water is let out by the Moses Saunders Dam near Cornwall, Ontario.

The unfortunate reality is that the threshold for triggering an increased release of water is far too high for many communities and businesses along the river. Since Plan 2014 went into effect, waterfront businesses have seen sharp decreases in economic activity due to lower boat traffic volumes and tourists not being able to access proper docking facilities. The region has also seen the following negative impacts:

Decline in Tourism:

- Tourism in the region has taken a sharp downturn this year due to high water levels.
- Continued loss of revenue will eventually lead to job cuts and business closures which have detrimental affects on small communities and neighbourhoods in municipalities like ours.

Property Damage:

- Properties along the river continue to experience severe water damage and have so over the past two years.
- Insurance companies are beginning to increase deductibles to the point where industry will be uninsurable – directly threatening the financial health of area businesses.

Myths vs. Reality

Myth #1: The IJC insists that high water levels are a direct result of climate change and that Plan 2014 is the best way to preserve the environment along the river.

Reality: This notion is not true; the fact is not enough water is following through Moses Saunders Dam at a rate great enough to prevent future flooding in our region next season.

Myth #2: The IJC claims that any additional capacity of water flowing through the damn would pose a threat to flooding the City of Montreal and other communities down river in Quebec.

Reality: It is well documented that Montreal could always use more water in the later half of the summer and would not be at risk of flooding.

Without immediate action by the IJC to reverse Plan 2014 the issue will undoubtedly be worse for other small business owners along our shorelines for years to come.

Today, I ask you to raise this important issue with your colleagues asking that we return to Plan 1958DD until further studies can be conducted. It's time shoreline communities in our region get some relief from the continued damage inflicted upon us by Plan 2014.

Sincerely,

ADD YOUR CONTACT INFO