

November 12, 2019

International Joint Commission  
Great Lakes Regional Office  
100 Ouellette Ave., 8th Floor  
Windsor ON N9A 6T3

To Members of the Commission:

I am writing to you today as the General Manager of MacDonald Turkey Point Marina Inc., a recreational boating industry business on the shore of Long Point Bay, Lake Erie that has been negatively impacted by dangerously high water levels along the Great Lakes and the 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 hydro power 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 will have detrimental effects on small communities and neighbourhoods in municipalities like ours.

Property Damage:

- Properties along the lake 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.

**Due to the 2019 flooding, MacDonald Turkey Point Marina Inc. suffered significant shoreline and waterfront damage within the marina to all dockage areas and the trailer park, especially washouts of existing seawall. We also suffered damage to the piers near the mouth of the channel and reconstruction was required for two of our dockage roadways due to high water levels.**

**Our unplanned and unbudgeted mitigation efforts to maintain a safe and accessible facility for the approximately 2,000 customers within the Marina property caused significant financial hardship to our business. In total, we invested \$291,153 to maintain what has been a safe and environmentally sound infrastructure for years.**

**Our season started approximately one month late due to the repairs needed as a result of the flooding and our maintenance staff continued making smaller repairs throughout the season. Added to the workload from the flooding was the fact that we were unable to find additional skilled trades staff to keep up with the added work load.**

**There is approximately 1,200 feet of seawall within the marina that needs immediate replacement at a cost of approximately \$600 per foot. Also, to replace the scour pad damage and rock infrastructure of our pier and to bring our breakwalls up to the standards they were at during the 2016 season will require approximately 300 loads of rock at approximately \$1,000 per load.**

**Not only were marinas on the entire north shore of Lake Erie affected, but also recreational and residential properties. In addition, we also operate a licenced water treatment facility. Our drinking water intake was also affected by the high waters and flooding which required extra disinfection costs.**

**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 flowing 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 dam 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 latter 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.

**The Lake Erie water level is dangerously high at this time. As noted above, our business will not be able to withstand another round of flooding and ice damage due to high water levels and wind conditions that create lake surges over the coming winter and in 2020.**

**We need immediate action by the IJC.**

**Thanking you in advance.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Thomson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Brad Thomson  
General Manager