



Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs

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*Ensuring environmental and economic
prosperity for the Great Lakes- St.
Lawrence region through
communications, policy research and
development and education.*

January 21, 2003

The Honorable Colin L. Powell
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Powell:

I am writing on behalf of the eight member states of the Great Lakes Commission (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin) to reiterate our longstanding concern over proposals to construct a Devil's Lake outlet in North Dakota. We urge you to refer this matter to the International Joint Commission to ensure a credible and objective assessment of environmental impacts associated with this proposed transboundary water diversion.

This is a highly controversial proposal. Affected states, as well as the province of Manitoba and the federal government of Canada, have raised a number of concerns that relate to prospective water pollution and invasive species problems. We are also concerned that the process to date has not respected the authority of the International Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 and, consequently, has threatened to compromise U.S.- Canada relations on a matter of great interest to both nations.

The Great Lakes states, in partnership with the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec, are working diligently to implement Annex 2001 of the Great Lakes Charter, a multi-jurisdictional agreement that recognizes the binational nature of the resource and establishes research, consultation and approval processes designed to safeguard the integrity and sustainable use of our shared waters. We believe that an understanding of the environmental and economic implications of any such transboundary diversion proposal is essential, and should be conducted in a thorough and objective manner by a credible party.

We urge you to promptly refer this matter to the International Joint Commission for such an independent analysis, and to ensure that construction activity is halted until such time that the analysis is completed. Such an action is not only appropriate from an environmental and economic standpoint, but is in the best interest of strengthening and maintaining positive relations with our Canadian neighbors.

I appreciate your consideration, and again request your prompt action in referring this matter to the International Joint Commission.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Hundley, Ph.D.
Chair

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