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May 10, 2004

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

Secretary Powell:

I am writing to support the government of Canada's request that you refer proposals for the Devils Lake Outlet in North Dakota to the International Joint Commission (IJC) for independent and credible review. I understand that the Minnesota Governor, Tim Pawlenty, has also written to you indicating the State of Minnesota's support for Canada's request. In recent years, Missouri has expressed its solidarity with Minnesota, Canada, and the Canadian Province of Manitoba who have all opposed the Devils Lake Outlet Project due to the potential for transfer of non-native species and harmful biota into the Hudson Bay basin.

As you may recall from my October 2003 letter to you on this subject, Missouri is fearful that this project is a first step toward an inter-basin diversion of water from the Missouri River basin into the Hudson Bay basin. We object to the outlet project because it will inevitably lead to an inlet to stabilize the lake levels. North Dakota interests have openly voiced their desire not only to relieve flooding, but also to ensure stabilization of the lake. Stabilization of the lake in dry years would require an inlet from the Missouri River basin. The inlet/outlet scenario would, in effect, be an inter-basin transfer of water from the Missouri River basin into the Hudson Bay basin. Missouri has always strongly opposed such diversions due to the downstream water quantity impacts.

The Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 set up the IJC to assist in preventing and resolving disputes over shared boundary waters. For this and many other reasons, including potential violation of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, I believe the Devils Lake Outlet Project warrants an independent review by the IJC. I would greatly appreciate your favorable consideration of Canada's request. If you have any questions, please contact Steve Mahfood, Director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, at 573-751-4732.

Sincerely,

Bob Holden  
Governor

BH:is

c: Gale Norton, Secretary of Interior

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Governor Tim Pawlenty  
Senator Christopher Bond  
Senator Jim Talent  
Congressman Kenny Hulshof  
Congressman W. Todd Akin  
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Congressman Ike Skelton  
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John Paul Woodley, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works  
Donald L. Evans, Secretary of Commerce