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**Transcript of the public meeting held by
the International Joint Commission
on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Review
at Chicago, Illinois, on November 2, 2005
(duration: 42 minutes)**

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**Transcription de la réunion publique tenue par
la Commission mixte internationale
sur l'examen de l'Accord relatif à la qualité de
l'eau dans les Grands Lacs
à Chicago (Illinois) le 2 novembre 2005
(durée : 42 minutes)**

IRENE BROOKS (Commissioner, U.S. Section, International Joint Commission): Good evening, everyone. I feel like we've individually met everybody here in the room. But if you guys on that side want to come over here, it's really hard to see and maybe we could have more of an intimate conversation.

As you're doing that, I'll introduce myself. I'm Irene Brooks, I am the United States Commissioner on the International Joint Commission. And my friend here and colleague Jack Blaney is from the Canadian Section and is from Vancouver.

Welcome to this beautiful facility. The purpose of the meeting is to hear your comments and what you think we should be telling governments about the Water Quality Agreement in the upcoming review in the spring of 2006.

We thank the City of Chicago for providing this wonderful facility. It certainly is a beautiful spot. A little hard to find, but I'm glad you all were able to find it and are welcome here tonight.

I'm going to ask Jack, Commissioner Blaney to do a brief overview of the Agreement, give you some dates. All of the information is in the material you picked up, but we'll just very briefly kind of tee it up for your discussion tonight.

JACK BLANEY (Commissioner, Canadian Section, International Joint Commission): Thanks, Irene. I'm sorry it's so kind of formal looking here. One of the reasons is that we're going to transcribe everything you say and we're going to send a transcript to the two governments. They have asked for that.

We're going to do a synthesis, our own synthesis, but they do want a word-for-word transcript, so that's why we have mics. And when you come up to speak, please use the mic.

I had a chat with about five or six of the people here tonight and they know about the Agreement, I think, than I do. We do not have, at my best estimation, a group of laypersons, but people who are very concerned and very knowledgeable about the water in the Great Lakes.

So my overview is going to be extremely brief. Several of you know and have read the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement several times.

But as you probably know, in the 1960s, we had a lot of problems and troubles with the Great Lakes water. One river running into the Great Lakes even caught on fire.

And the people of the two countries asked their governments to try to do something about protecting themselves from further pollution of the Lakes, so they asked the International Joint Commission to study it and they made a recommendation that the two governments should have something called the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

And the first one was signed in 1972, and it was essentially aimed at industrial pollution and pollution from residential...from cities and towns.

In 1978, there was a new one that came out, and it looked at pollution more broadly than just industrial and domestic and pollution.

The last Agreement was signed in 1987, and this is where it took a very large concept, talking about an ecosystem approach, and they identified 43 areas in the Great Lakes which they called Areas of Concern, areas that were so contaminated that you could not safely use the water in any way, in terms of swimming or fishing or whatever, and a lot of contaminated sediments.

Of those 43, by the way, two have been de-listed, and a lot of improvements have been made in a lot of the other 41, but 41 still remain listed as Areas of Concern.

Now the two governments are now reviewing the Agreement and they're going to do it in the spring of 2006, and they have asked the IJC to hold a number of public meetings.

We're holding 14 public meetings – hi David – and we are going to give them your views. We're also going to give our own views as to what we think the Agreement ought to talk about.

The governments are doing this because there are still concerns out there. Whether or not there are going to take climate change into account, we do not know, but we do know that they are concerned about sewage still, particularly from agriculture, intensive agriculture.

The increased urbanization around the Lakes is another matter which the two countries are concerned. And there are new kinds of chemicals now going into the Lakes that weren't even hardly known of when the 1987 Agreement was signed.

So those are a number of reasons why they're doing this. And we will pass this on to the governments and then make our own views known. Irene?

IRENE BROOKS: The information behind us, on the screen, gives you Web sites and different ways that you can communicate with us, either snail mail, e-mail. There will be a Web dialogue for four days, November 29th through December 2nd, which is something we've never tried before, we're going to see how it works. We already have received e-mails.

So we're trying to reach as far as we can with the modest funds that we have. As Jack said, this is one of 14 meetings, so we're trying to hit every area of the basin as well as we can.

As Jack said, we will be sending a report to the governments. The governments hope to have final terms of reference for their process available to the public early December. And I understand from the governments that there will be additional opportunities for public input once they begin their review of the Agreement.

So without further information, because I think you probably, as Jack said, are pretty well versed in the Agreement...David Ullrich is here, who serves on our Great Lakes Water Quality Board, and I think had something to do with obtaining this room tonight. Do you have any words of wisdom tonight from the Mayor's office, or is there someone from the Mayor's office?

DAVID ULLRICH (IJC Great Lakes Water Quality Board / Director, Great Lakes Cities Initiative, Northeast Midwest Institute): I'm stretched for words of wisdom, but I do (inaudible)...

IRENE BROOKS: Well, thank you. Welcome again. Well, we have asked you to fill out these forms, and we'll call those who have as we have received them. And the first person is Dan Enyard. There is a mic on right there.

DAN ENYARD: Commissioner Brooks and Commissioner Blaney, thank you. I guess it's not only an honour, it's a privilege to be able to speak first and to bring you some comments.

My professional career in Illinois government spans 28 years and has basically focused exclusively on the Great Lakes, and of course on Lake Michigan. Specifically, I relate to management of Illinois' diversion as allowed pursuant to Supreme Court decree.

And so my comments tonight will certainly reflect the years of experience that I have had in watching and observing the progress that we've been making in environmental restoration, but I do need to emphasize that my comments tonight are not reflective of my position with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, but rather as an Illinois resident and one who has lived his entire life and cherished the Lakes very deeply. Okay, sorry...

JACK BLANEY: I think you almost have to keep (?) that mic.
(LAUGHS)

DAN ENYARD: Well, all right. In the interest of being brief, I'm just going to focus on one issue tonight that I think needs some serious attention as the IJC and the two federal governments begin this process of deliberation, and that is this.

I think our system for implementing environmental restoration projects on the Great Lakes is seriously flawed. In fact, I think it's close to non-functional. We have fomented a culture that promotes involvement and participation, but unfortunately has led to an inability to complete projects.

It's been extremely difficult to undertake public projects today, even those where the goals are environmental restoration such as dredging to remove contaminants sediments.

Waukegan Harbour is a prime example. We have known since the 1970s that the level of PCBs in the Harbour is a serious problem. There have been multiple studies completed by a number of agencies, both federal and state, there have been task forces, there has been citizens advisory groups consisting of agency reps at all levels, environmental organizations and businesses and others, options have been developed, analyzed, but no preferred solution has ever emerged.

Someone or some group has always got a reason – and quite often a very good reason – not to support a particular option. To his day, it remains one of the IJC's Areas of Concern. It probably would be a sobering experience to tally up

the total hours of effort and dollars that have been expended over the last 25 years, and no end is yet in sight.

The do-nothing alternative unfortunately, I think, becomes a de facto selected plan. I guess I would venture to say since only two other of the 43 Areas of Concern have been de-listed to date, that this problem is probably not unique to this end of the Great Lakes.

This observation, I want to make it very clear, this is not a critique on government – obviously, I work for government – it’s certainly not a critique on individual agencies and it’s certainly not a critique on stakeholder groups and public involvement, nor would it ever suggest that we abandon careful study and analysis of options and impacts.

However, I think there is a need to re-evaluate the way in which we seek to develop and implement restoration projects. We need to develop a better process that will allow interested parties to develop the inertia that is needed to take environmental goals and objectives and turn them into projects that will lead to improve environmental health for the Great Lakes.

And I think that would be my recommendation as one issue that we need to focus on at the highest level of government, is to try to figure out how we can better develop a process that involves all of the involved stakeholder groups but will lead us to an eventual adoption of a selected option and a project that will actually result in environmental improvement. Thank you.

IRENE BROOKS: Okay, thank you, Dan. The next speaker is...and I cannot pronounce because I can't read it all...Frances, I'll say the first name. Frances, there you are.

FRANCES CANONIZADO (Illinois Public Interest Research Group): That's me.

IRENE BROOKS: Could you tell me how to pronounce your last name?

FRANCES CANONIZADO: Sure, it's Canonizado.

IRENE BROOKS: Thank you.

FRANCES CANONIZADO: You're welcome. Thank you. My name is Frances and I am with the Illinois Public Interest Research Group. We are a consumer and environmental advocacy organization, and our involvement with the work on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement is fairly new.

We have recently started our Clean Water program, and so I am here speaking as an environmental advocate for Illinois, but also as an Illinois citizen and resident.

I did not grow up in Illinois. I actually hail from the Pacific Coast, grew up near the Oregon coastline. But when I first moved to Illinois, the first thing that I fell in love with was Lake Michigan. I mean, everybody had told me, you have to go see Lake Michigan, it's a gorgeous lake. I mean, like, it's a lake, it's not an ocean, not like where I come from.

But I got here and when I first stepped into Lake Michigan, it was just love at first sight, it was instant fascination. And I have stayed and I have been here and I plan to be here for a long, long time.

Now, in my professional work, I have worked on toxics and especially emerging toxics in the Great Lakes. And I could go through a really long list of recommendations that have also been recommended by groups like Great Lakes United and Alliance for the Great Lakes and the Biodiversity Project and SELA (?), which we are involved in discussions with.

But if there is anything that I would personally want to emphasize, that the two governments look into and really pay close attention to, and if you were to revise the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, it would be the following things.

I would stress being preventative in your ecosystem approach, preemptively identifying threats, taking preventive action in the face of uncertainty. A lot of times, the burden of proof is always on the public.

For our organization, we are in existence because we are defending the public interest, protecting the public interest, and it's always been frustrating to have to defend the side of the public when there is mounting evidence on the proponent of an activity that they are more likely to be in question. Why is it the public's burden to defend that?

So shifting the burden of proof to the proponents of an activity ,exploring a wide range of alternatives to possibly harmful actions, and increasing public participation in decision-making.

So mostly, what we're really asking for is a precautionary approach to studying threats to the Great Lakes. And I would like to thank both governments for holding these public meetings and obtaining public comment. We really appreciate it. Thank you.

IRENE BROOKS: Thank you, Frances. Next is Paul...

PAUL KEKOURAS (President, Illinois Dunesland Preservation Society):
It's Kekouras.

IRENE BROOKS: Kekouras, that's what you said. Paul.

PAUL KEKOURAS: We will be turning in written comments.

IRENE BROOKS: You'll be turning in written comments?

PAUL KEKOURAS: Yes.

IRENE BROOKS: Okay.

JACK BLANEY: (inaudible)...how about a brief (inaudible)...so that the other two will (inaudible)...

PAUL KEKOURAS: Paul Kekouras. I am President of the Illinois Dunesland Preservation Society. I am also an environmental professional dealing with coastal issues and have for the last 30 years. We will be handing in written comments.

One thing I'd like to express, and that is over the years, I've watched and observed the water quality standards of your organization, but I've also observed the inability of some of the states, this state in particular, and the federal in this area, to not heed some of those standards.

And one of the things I'd like to see, in general terms, is somewhere, somehow, a way to get these entities to enforce. Enforcement is such an issue. But we'll be dealing with that in our written comments. Thank you very much.

IRENE BROOKS: Tim Montague.

TIM MONTAGUE: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I come from an environmental research foundation, I am an environmental scientist here in the Chicago region. I have lived in the Great Lakes region since 1990.

And we have written extensively about the work of the IJC in our newsletter, Rachel's Environment and Health News, which some of our audience might be familiar with.

As Frances mentioned, really, our main issue is the precautionary principle with regards to the Water Quality Agreement. The IJC has taken a precautionary approach or used precautionary language in some of their reports, but we believe that you could integrate stronger precautionary language into the Water Quality Agreement.

For those of you who are not familiar with the precautionary principle, the main thrust of it is that it does shift the burden of proof away from the public,

who is paying for, for example, environmental toxic with their health, with our children's IQ.

For example, 50,000 children in the Great Lakes region are impacted every year by mercury emissions, and that's damage, neurological damage that is going to be with them their entire life.

So until we address mercury emissions from, for example, coal power plants and really set some specific quantitative sun-setting guidelines...and that's one of our other recommendations, is about setting quantitative guidelines and tie those to timelines for taking a contaminant out of the system.

Because with persistent toxicants, as we all know, until you stop discharging the toxicant, you're going to have a problem with that toxicant. And mercury is just one example. I mean, PCBs, pesticides, there are many, many examples of persistent toxicants where sun-setting is the key.

And the precautionary approach tells us that if we simply step back and before releasing the toxicant into the environment and look at the scientific evidence, if we have an inkling that this is going to cause harm, then we should consider what are the alternatives before we release the toxicant into the environment, and put the burden of proof on the stakeholder to demonstrate what are some of the alternatives before concluding that, well, coal is the solution.

I mean, we recently wrote about clean energy, and there are alternatives to coal, but that's a big issue. And we invite the IJC to take a stand on things like mercury emissions because we have tremendous respect for the voice the IJC

brings. I mean, it's very powerful to have a Canadian and U.S. joint body, that's a very unusual circumstance.

As far as the five areas that the IJC kind of invited as a question in the preamble to these hearings, we would like to just come in with a resounding yes, that you should definitely address global warming, you should definitely address non-point source pollution, aquatic alien invasive species, chemical contamination, which is an ongoing, and development and urban sprawl.

And I'll conclude with a few comments on urban sprawl. I mean, that is perhaps the largest single threat now to the Great Lakes, and it's a silent threat for most of the public.

We look around our urban and suburban world and we're not aware of how it is impacting the water and the biome of the Great Lakes. Fifty per cent of our wetlands are already gone. And so again, using a precautionary approach here, let's promote alternatives to paving over the planet.

Green development has proven that you can improve the runoff of an urban area with some relatively simple construction methods that reduce runoff because you're not putting hardtop everywhere.

And again, we just want to encourage the IJC to take a stand on that because you're one of the few powerful voices that speaks for the entire ecosystem.

And as we can see, I mean, I think it's a travesty that so few people from such a large city on the Great Lakes are here tonight. I'm really shocked. But again, I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

IRENE BROOKS: Thank you very much. Next we have Cameron Davis.

CAMERON DAVIS (Executive Director, Alliance for the Great Lakes): Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Cameron Davis, I am the Executive Director with the Alliance for the Great Lakes, formed in 1970, and we used to be called the Lake Michigan Federation. We're the oldest citizens' Great Lakes conservation organization on the continent.

I'll start with a quick story. I did a legal internship at the United Nations environment program in Nairobi, Kenya, many, many years ago. And one of the first things that happened when I reported for duty was one of the environmental attorneys sat me down and said, what about this Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement? Have you really found that it works in the region?

And I was flabbergasted that here in Africa, somebody was asking me about the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

I'd always known that we'd taken a lot of regional pride in the Agreement and that it was just simply a matter of regional pride, but I think that that experience showed me that that's not the case, that in fact, it does have global precedence and that it's one of many reasons to be proud of it, but that the Agreement really inspires to remember that we can and need to continue to work

together as neighbours, the U.S. and Canada, to be able to steward this incredible ecosystem that we have.

And it's not just a matter of the two nations, either. We have tribes, we have countless municipalities, we have eight states, we've got two Canadian provinces. There are lot of jurisdictions.

And the Agreement is one of those rare things that brings us together to remind us that we have shared obligations just as much as we have shared privileges in swimming at our beaches, fishing the Great Lakes waters, and drinking the water from the Great Lakes.

I am worried that the Water Quality Agreement, however, is teetering on the brink of irrelevance. I think there are things we can do to keep that from happening, and they're fairly easy to understand, not quite so easy when you get into the details.

But for right now, given what the IJC is asking, where should we go with revitalizing the Agreement, I think there are three points that can help a great deal.

One of them is that the Agreement needs to be a precautionary force. It needs to be that statement that drives us to be preventative in what we do. And you have heard this Tim, you have heard this from Frances, you have heard this from others, and I'm sure you'll hear it from others tonight.

What does that mean? One of the traditional strengths of the Agreement is just that, being preventative. The Agreement called for zero discharge, it called

for virtual elimination of toxic pollutants, and it's now time to spread that preventative approach and make it work for other things.

For example, we knew that the zebra mussel was about ready to enter the Great Lakes long before it ever did. There's no reason that we couldn't have and shouldn't have stopped that threat, which we now know is costing probably hundreds of millions of dollars to us as taxpayers.

We want the Agreement to do a better job from that traditional strength, which is being preventative in nature.

At the same time, it's not good enough to just prevent new threats from manifesting themselves in the Great Lakes. It's important that the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement drive rehabilitation of the Great Lakes.

And in particular, one of the things that I'd really like to see come out of the next generation of the Agreement is a Canadian counterpart to the Great Lakes restoration effort that we're now seeing in the United States.

And by restoration, I don't mean bringing the Great Lakes back to pre-settlement conditions, I mean restorative effect, making sure that the Great Lakes can continue to function to support the population around the Great Lakes, to support fish and wildlife and other inhabitants of the ecosystem that we share the Great Lakes with.

Third, and finally, we also want to see the Agreement demand accountability for making real progress and making real change for real people. That means beaches open for swimming. That means people able to eat the fish,

especially women and children and other sensitive populations who rely on fish for their customs or their diets.

But one of the things that I think is lacking right now is that accountability. We're not seeing that the Agreement is making real progress. And Dan Enyard's comments before about having 43 Areas of Concern and yet nearly 20 years after the '87 protocol, we only have two that have been removed from the list, and even those largely not because of cleanup.

There is a lot of detail that needs to go with these principles, but I do think we need to start with the principles. We've got to know where we want to go in order to get there, and these three principles can help quite a bit.

I'll leave it at that. Thank you very much for hosting this. I think the IJC has done a wonderful job by getting out early and asking the public what it thinks about the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. So I mostly want to thank all of you for coming tonight because I know it's a sacrifice. Thank you.

IRENE BROOKS: Thank you for your comments. David Ullrich.

DAVID ULLRICH: Thank you very much, Commissioner Brooks and Commissioner Blaney. I greatly appreciate your being here in Chicago and I commend you for the Commission's 14-city visit around the Great Lakes. Having visited six cities during the month of August for the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration, I know what it feels like.

I am the Executive Director of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, an organization with approximately 85 cities from the United States

and Canada representing a total population of about 15 million, and it's about an even split in cities and population between U.S. and Canadian membership.

We're just a little more than two years old right now. Mayor Daley of Chicago is the chairman and Mayor Miller of Toronto is the vice-chairman. We are advocating more protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and we want to be a positive part of that.

My comments tonight have not been officially endorsed by our Board of Directors as yet. I have reason to believe that most of these will be in our official written comments, so this is a little preview of what I expect will eventually appear in the formal comments that we submit.

First of all, I think that we believe that the Agreement should be the primary document that defines the working relationship between Canada and the United States in the work of protecting and restoring the Great Lakes.

This should be, if you will, the base document that we always go back to. And because of the binational relationship that exists and the nature of the resource, this is fundamentally important to the success of the overall effort. We try to practice that by being a binational organization ourselves among the cities, but we think this is very important.

Secondly, this is the kind of document that should really lay out the vision and the goals for the Great Lakes. And it's critical that there be a shared vision. Some have referred to it as having a north star that we all look to to guide us and

keep us on course. But equally important is to have goals and measures so we know if we are progressing towards the state that we want to reach.

Now, next, I have referred specifically on a number of occasions to just the Great Lakes, but as you may gather from the name of the organization that I represent, we believe that the St. Lawrence is a very important part of this overall system, and we do believe that the next agreement should be a Great Lakes and St. Lawrence agreement.

Speaking of that, as important as water quality is, we think that things have advanced a great deal since 1972 in our perspective on things, and it's not possible to look just at water quality in isolation. It is so fully integrated with the broader ecosystem that we think the ecosystem concept needs to be formally part of the Agreement.

Next – and I will concede that this is a little bit of a provincial interest in terms of representing cities – we do believe that the current Agreement does not give proper recognition to cities.

It certainly recognizes the federal governments and state and provincial, but cities play an incredibly important role in day-to-day life on the Great Lakes and we think that cities should be formally recognized as equal partners with the other orders of government in the future work that we do on the Great Lakes.

Next, I know a lot of excellent work has been done through the State of the Lakes ecosystem conference process, but at the same time, I think we need to do a much better job of establishing indicators and collecting data and reporting it in

a general way where the general public can have a much better sense of whether the Lakes are getting cleaner, dirtier, or staying the same.

So this is the kind of thing that I think that the IJC can take a stronger role with all of the governments in terms of focusing on the indicators to make sure that we have critical ones.

Right along with that, I think all of us who have been involved in the Great Lakes are aware of the probably rooms and rooms full of data and the hard drives that are now loaded to the gills with data, but the management of that and the delivery of that information again to the broader public and the policy makers I think needs to be significantly improved. So some stronger coalescing force of that data, I think, is important.

At the same time, I think it's important to avoid duplicative reporting as much as possible. As the Agreement is reviewed and possibly revised, it's important to look at the reporting systems that are included to make sure that there's just enough, but not too much.

As is demonstrated tonight by getting the public involved, I think full public involvement and full transparency needs to be a watch word in the Agreement from day one until indefinitely into the future.

And then, finally, I'd just suggest perhaps a fresh look at the advisory boards structure that has been created and perhaps a little better delineation of responsibilities among those various boards so that you get the advice that you need and that we don't have gaps and duplication with that.

So with that, again, I thank you very much for having this gathering and being patient enough to listen to me speak for a few minutes. Thanks very much.

IRENE BROOKS: Thank you, David. You mentioned the St. Lawrence, you have many thoughts about being included in the Agreement. Do you have any thoughts about Lake Champlain?

DAVID ULLRICH: Yes, I do. I think it's a beautiful lake in northern New England and that it should be admired as such. But it's a wonderful lake, but I don't think it's quite a Great Lake. I've had people from Lake Winnipeg suggest that they also have a Great Lake, but I think it's probably best to stick with the system.

IRENE BROOKS: We look forward to working with your organization as we tackle urbanization within the IJC. Everything links back to that, and I think all our boards are looking into urbanization and how they can assist in the bigger view.

DAVID ULLRICH: Well, we agree completely. We recognize that we are part of the problem and we want to be a big part of the solution as well. There's a meeting next week in Toronto on this very point that unfortunately I will not be able to attend, but a representative from Mayor Daley's office is going to attend for me, and we will be very active participants in that.

IRENE BROOKS: Thank you.

DAVID ULLRICH: Thank you.

IRENE BROOKS: That concludes the folks who have signed up. Is there anyone in the audience who wishes to speak? Aw, come on. No?

UNIDENTIFIED: (inaudible)...

IRENE BROOKS: Okay, could be.

DEBORAH SHORE: Good evening, my name is Deborah Shore. I like in Skokie, Illinois, which is actually a Native American word for marsh. And I'd like to remind people that Chicago is the largest city in our country whose name links it to the Native landscape, in fact is Potawatomi Indian word for the nodding wild onion that grew in profusion along our riverbanks.

I want to make two points. One is over the next 20 or 30 years, we are going to find substitutes for oil, for fossil fuels, and the attention is going to shift to fresh water, and those of us who lives in the Great Lakes cities are going to be looked at ever more closely as to how we are as stewards of what is an irreplaceable resource, which is our fresh water.

And so I'd like you, as you go forward, to keep the long view, because while our wonderful Lakes contain 20 per cent of the world's fresh surface water, we are a far less smaller proportion of the world's population, and so how we act now and going forward is going to be every more important.

And I'll tell a short story. I live in a single family home in Skokie, we have an asphalt driveway, and my partner and I wanted to replace it with gravel because that would allow rainwater to infiltrate and recharge our underground water supply. And we thought it would be more aesthetically pleasing, too.

And the village said you can't do that. You can only use concrete, asphalt, or paving brick, all impervious surfaces. So we calculated the runoff coefficient, and if we converted to gravel, from our driveway alone, it would save between 9,000 and 10,000 gallons a year, that today flows into the street, collects salt and oil and contaminants, goes into our storm sewers, gets treated, and ends up becoming part of the dead zone in the Gulf of Mexico, because we here are part of New Orleans' problem.

In my view, that's not a sustainable future. And so we need to be acting on an individual level, on the municipal level, and on the state and federal level, to promote progressive initiatives to keep more freshwater in our basin, to send less of it downstream to be other people's problems. Thank you.

IRENE BROOKS: Thank you very much. I knew if we waited long enough...Tom Daggett...

(TAPE CHANGES SIDES)

TOM DAGGETT: Hello, I'm Tom Daggett. Am I close enough to the mic? Closer. I'm Tom Daggett and I am an attorney here in Chicago, I have my own environmental boutique law firm.

But in 1987, I was an attorney for the EPA and had the privilege of working on the 1987 amendments to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement at that time, working on the draft and then negotiating them with Canada, working with the State Department.

I wrote a paper on lessons learned from that effort and suggestions for the current effort that I presented at the Biennial Meeting in Kingston in June. I attached a copy of that paper to my submittal here, and I won't repeat what I said there, but I just wanted to briefly address events that have happened since June and the Biennial Meeting that I think illustrate a point that I'd like to make.

On July the 7th, the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration process in the United States, that was initiated under a presidential order, produced a strategy for restoration of the Great Lakes.

That Collaboration was really a remarkable group, it brought together many federal agencies, state agencies, local government, First Nations, I participated on behalf of a citizens' group, but there were also industry groups that were all part of this process, and it produced a quite aggressive strategy. It had a pretty big price tag of \$20 billion, I believe, over the next five years.

In October, on October 28th, another entity that was started by that same presidential order, an inter-agency task force of ten federal agencies and Cabinet secretaries, gave their review to the President on the strategy that had been put together by the Collaboration.

This August 28th submittal by the Inter-Agency Task Force opposed the strategy that was put out by the Collaboration, asserting that no new money beyond existing budgets should be applied to the restoration effort.

It's obvious there were representatives of those same agencies on the Collaboration when it put together the strategy in July that was then disavowed to some significant extent by the Inter-Agency Task Force in October.

What happened between July and October that led to that dichotomy? Mostly, Hurricane Katrina happened, and the political storm that that brewed up led the Administration to pledge, I believe, \$200 billion to rebuild buildings along the Gulf Coast, and the scramble for funds that came from the effort to come up with that money led this group of Administration, Cabinet members and agency officials to recommend against spending \$20 billion over a five-year period on restoration of the Great Lakes.

Executive agencies and governments of both of our countries must, of necessity, address crises that come up, that were unexpected in a short-term basis, and apply limited resources to address those issues that are of hot concern among their constituents, but that can leave chronic issues like the destruction of the Great Lakes fishery, that have taken decades or centuries to arise, in the lurch.

I think that governments of the two countries have to address those short-term crises, but they did create the International Joint Commission recognizing that some entity needed to address the long-term chronic issues, like restoration of the Great Lakes, that are not the hot issue of the day compared to bird flu, perhaps, but they are not issue that are going to go away just because a hot issue of the day arose that consumed all of the funds that were going to go towards this long-term restoration effort.

And that's why I think it is so important for the International Joint Commission, working through the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, that is back a bit from the scramble over dollars, to lead the two countries towards a restoration strategy that will work, along the lines of the strategy proposed by the regional collaboration, that can eventually be implemented when the two countries can muster the political will or the funds to actually implement it. Thank you.

IRENE BROOKS: Thank you, Tom. Anybody else? Yes, Sir.

GARY WILSON: Good evening. Excuse me. My name is Gary Wilson, from Oak Park, Illinois. I hadn't originally planned on commenting, but I couldn't resist after hearing a few of the speakers.

The first gentleman who spoke tonight...was it...okay, thank you...he gave some very eloquent remarks, but he kind of prefaced them by saying he didn't want to be critical of government agencies.

I would like to be critical. The fact that the AOCs have not been cleaned up, except, I think as Cam said, two, none of them in the United States, we should be critical of that.

And if the Water Quality Agreement isn't going to move closer to being irrelevant, then it's time to drop some of the polite talk and be critical and demand accountability. Thank you.

IRENE BROOKS: Thank you. Anyone else? Well, we thank you for coming tonight. You all were very brave in coming to see us and telling us what you think.

We will pass on the information to governments. And even though it's a small group, I think your comments were certainly excellent and to the point.

So if there is no one else who wishes to speak at this time, I will thank you again and say good night. Thank you.
