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Transcript of the public meeting held by the International Joint Commission on the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Review at Midland, Ontario, on November 8, 2005 (duration: 110 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 Midland (Ontario) le 8 novembre 2005 (durée : 110 minutes)

HERB GRAY (Chairman, Canadian Section, International Joint Commission): …Keat of the IJC's staff from Washington. And I want to bring the regrets of my colleague Dennis Schornack, the American Chair of the IJC, my co-chair, he has other things that came up unexpectedly, but Mr. Keat will be giving him a full report of what's happening.

So again, I say the meeting is called to order. And if Mayor MacDonald would like to come forward, I would be very pleased to give him the podium. (APPLAUSE)

GEORGE J. MACDONALD (Mayor, City of Midland, Ontario): Thank you very much, Mr. Gray. It's a privilege to be passed the podium from such a prominent citizen in our country as Herb Gray. I think, Mr. Gray, let's give him a real big round of applause. (APPLAUSE)

Thank you very much. On behalf of our municipality, I wish to welcome everyone present tonight, most particularly our guests from the Great Lakes International Joint Commission for Canada and the United States. We thank you for choosing Midland as a venue for this public session.

And you know, it's probably six or eight weeks ago that I got a call from Mr. Gray that he wanted to come to Midland with this venue, and I was thrilled to know that it was coming here, because of where we are on the Georgian Bay waters.

We also want to thank the Severn Sound Association for assisting and coordinating tonight's presentation. The Association has been instrumental in representing a very keen interest in preserving and enhancing our water bodies.

Indeed, we have remained quite pleased with the good work, including the de-listing of Severn Sound as a hot spot within the Great Lakes watershed a few years ago.

We live on the shores of beautiful Georgian Bay and our Great Lakes system, one of the largest collection of freshwater lakes in the world. Whether it's for travel, commercial, recreation, or consumption, it is incumbent on our generation of leaders to do all we can to preserve this natural resource. That must be our legacy for generations to come.

Once again, I want to thank the IJC for choosing Midland. I welcome all of you here tonight, and thank you for attending. And may we all join together and improve the water quality of Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe, which we hear a lot about in our areas here.

So I'll pass it back to Mr. Gray, and of course, there's others in the area that he'd like to recognize. Mr. Gray.

HERB GRAY: Well, before giving an opening statement which hopefully will provide some context for our meeting today, I'd like to recognize my former colleague, your MP, Paul Devilliers. (APPLAUSE)

We had many years of constructive association and projects like Severn Sound and others, and thank you for coming out, Paul, and best wishes to you for the future. As a non-partisan public officer, that's all I can say. (LAUGHS)

Well, again, good evening and welcome to our public meeting on the review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. We are here because the governments of the United States and Canada asked the IJC to find out what you think the governments should consider as they begin their review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in the spring of 2006.

The governments asked us to do this because the Commission has been, as many of you know, involved with the Agreement since its inception. In fact, the 1972 Agreement, in large part, comes out of a 1970 IJC report on the water quality of the Great Lakes.

In 1972, when the Lakes were suffering from heavy loads of conventional pollutants, the governments signed a visionary agreement that focused on reducing pollution from municipal and industrial sources, and in particular on controlling the input of phosphorus.

The governments recognized that it would be necessary to adapt to new challenges, so in 1978, they signed a new Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and this Agreement took an ecosystem approach and focused on persistent toxic substances.

In 1987, a protocol was added to the Agreement to address degraded conditions in Great Lakes Areas of Concern and to reduce critical pollutants on a lake-wide basis.

Under the Agreement, Canada and the United States have set common objectives for a variety of pollutants and have agreed to implement a range of research, monitoring, and pollution control activities, and efforts in both countries have resulted in important reductions in discharges of nutrients and toxic pollutants, particularly from municipal and industrial sources.

I should note under the current agreement, my Commission reports at least biannually on matters relating to water quality in the Great Lakes, including progress toward achieving the purpose and the specific provisions of the Agreement. It has issued 12 such reports. They're all available online at our Web site www.ijc.org.

And the Agreement has resulted in binational initiatives that have brought about important results. For example, Canadians and Americans have set the same limits on total phosphorus loads for each lake, they have agreed that approaches to address persistent toxic substances will be guided by a philosophy of zero discharge, and both countries have made major advances in understanding the dynamics of this complex ecosystem.

Now the Agreement provides a framework for binational goals and cooperative efforts to restore and protect the Great Lakes, but the governments have not made any changes to it since the 1987 Protocol nearly 20 years ago.

So there is widespread recognition that parts of the Agreement, such as some of the numeric objectives, are out of date, and at the same time, there are several issues that require binational cooperation, either under the Agreement or through a separate process, such as preventing the introduction of aquatic invasive species, reducing the impacts of land use activities, and conducting research programs that will enable us to understand large-scale ecosystem changes.

Now currently, as you likely know, domestic policy initiatives are underway that will frame Great Lakes restoration activities in each country. These include the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration in the U.S., and the forthcoming renewal of the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem.

This makes the forthcoming review of the common goals in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement a very, very timely endeavour.

So the two governments are now getting ready to review the Agreement, and in preparation for that, they have asked us by formal reference to hold a series of meetings to find out the views of the Great Lakes population on how well the Agreement has worked and what, if anything, needs to be changed.

And the governments and my Commission believe it's very important for the Great Lakes community to be heard at this stage so that the governments get a sense of your priorities.

Now I have already said the governments have indicated their formal review will begin in March. They hope to make the final terms of reference for their process available to the public in early December.

The two governments have said there will be additional opportunities for public input once they begin their review of the Agreement. They also have said they will consult with First Nations and Tribes on a government-to-government basis.

Now as indicated on the slide behind us here and in our printed materials, there are several ways to provide comment to us. And also, please join us for a live Web dialogue that will be held from November 29th through December 2nd.

Now when the consultations end, the IJC will write a report synthesizing all of the views that it has heard. We'll also send all of the documents along with that report and the transcripts of these meetings to the governments and release this material to the public.

Now the consultations formally end November 30th, the Web dialogue carries on after that. And I have to say that for our meeting today, we will call you in the order we received your request to speak.

So you already filled in, some of you, registration forms for that purpose, and if you need a form, if you raise your hand, somebody will bring you a form to fill out or you can go out to the hall. And I think there will be plenty of time to hear everyone.

So we're relying on a tape recording to produce a transcript - and this is an admonition to myself as well as anybody else – please make sure to speak into the microphone.

And I won't try and set any time limits for remarks at this stage, we'll see how we get along. And the thing that I'm going to do is first grab the sheets, that's my first step here, and after I've done that, I am going to call upon the people in the order they have signed in.

Mr. Keat, from our Washington office, is sending me a note. Well, there's 15 persons who have indicated they want to speak, so let's try and keep it to five minutes for each one so that if people who haven't signed in want to say something, we'll give them a chance to be heard.

Now the first speakers are Don and Joan McMaster, and if you come up and speak from this podium, we welcome you and we look forward to your hearing…your comments, and we want to hear them. Don and Joan McMaster.

JOAN MCMASTER: Thank you, Mr. Gray. To be honest, I said no, I didn't want to speak, but here I am. On the other hand, since I am now here…

HERB GRAY: You've got to speak. (LAUGHS)

JOAN MCMASTER: (inaudible)…so this is going to be a very off-the-cuff question. But we do live on the Georgian Bay, we live at Midland Point and have for the last 12 years, and we have noted consistently the water levels going down. We also have a cottage at Golden Bay (?), the shores, and we're aware of

the water levels decreasing, and this is consistent and for sure, it's particularly noticeable.

I just wonder if anybody has any comment any and any reason and any (inaudible), besides selling the water somewhere (inaudible)…can give us any reason beyond…I'm old enough to know the rise and the fall and the rise and the fall of the Georgian Bay water levels, but to me, it falls a lot longer this time than it has been. And for (inaudible) question (inaudible)…

HERB GRAY: I should provide some information to the group, it may be helpful. Is this on? Yes. I want to provide a bit of information to the people which may be helpful.

We have been discussing with the Georgian Bay Homeowners Association the issue of water levels, and as you may know, we're completing a study of our Control Order for Lake Ontario and the international section of the St. Lawrence.

And we have asked the two governments to approve a plan of study and fund a similar review of the Control Order at the Sault as well as Lake St. Clair, the St. Clair River and the Detroit River, especially the issue of dredging of the St. Clair River, and the two governments are studying our request and our formal Upper Lakes Plan of Study that we'd like them to agree to fund, and hopefully this will deal with some of the issues that are of concern to you.

This meeting today is primarily on water quality. I realize that water quality is linked with quantity, but I just want to note that we've been tasked to assist the governments in reviewing the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement,

but we have another process underway which hopefully will help everybody concerned about the water levels to have those concerns dealt with as well.

So the next person who said that they wished to speak is Keith Sherman, representing the Severn Sound Environmental Association. Mr. Sherman, I invite you to the podium.

KEITH SHERMAN (Severn Sound Environmental Association): Thank you, Mr. Gray. I would like to just address the meeting as a former Remedial Action Plan coordinator who very much appreciated the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement in providing a path forward for how to move ahead with Remedial Action Plans in the Great Lakes.

Not everybody realizes that these problem areas or hot spots have been on a list for quite some time and they were going to stay on a list for quite some time unless some action was taken.

And in the 1987 Protocol, Annex 2 provided a procedure for how to have regular comprehensive progress made on removing these areas from the Great Lakes as Areas of Concern.

And that…I would like to comment that it would be very much appreciated, I think, by all of the Great Lakes community if these areas were to continue to have work done on them, especially the ones that have not been de-listed, which is most of them.

And a lot of very good work has been done, a lot of resources have been put to good use in those areas. Do not lose the momentum by having the Remedial Action Plan process reduced in its efforts in all of the Great Lakes.

I would also like to mention that we have also struggled with, from the beginning, persistent toxic chemicals in the Great Lakes, many of which were instrumental in getting these toxic hot spots put on the list of Areas of Concern and in other areas of the Great Lakes.

These chemicals have been identified in the existing agreement. Many of them have been discontinued in their manufacture and discontinued in their regular use, but they still persist.

And in terms of finishing the job, we need to continue to complete that task of finishing, until we reach zero discharge, until we have effectively eliminated them from the ability to affect us in our environment.

This also opens the door to an area of emerging chemicals of concern. There are many, many new chemicals of concern that regular, routine environmental tests aren't even available for yet.

These chemicals need to be addressed in a process. Because there are so many chemicals coming out and so many new substances being created, it is requested that over the long term, there be a process to deal with emerging synthetic chemicals of concern and that this be represented in the revised Agreement.

If I can put one more comment in place, I recently attended a Great Lakes mayors conference in Quebec City, at which the Great Lakes mayors indicated a willingness to have their voices heard more comprehensively by the International Joint Commission and under the governance aspects of the Agreement.

It is suggested that some provision for having the municipalities around the Great Lakes represented as some sort of jurisdiction or organization be put in place so that their voices can more directly be heard by the international community on the Great Lakes. Thank you very much.

HERB GRAY: And now I'd like to call on Peggy Breckenridge (?), councillor for Tiny Township. And I know she has to speak before 7:30, so I think you just made it.

PEGGY BRECKENRIDGE (Councillor, Tiny Township): Actually, I think Keith pretty much reiterated what I wanted to say and he said it in a much more scientific manner than I would.

But I just want to have my voice heard as representing all of council and staff of tiny Township that we certainly do, like everyone else, have concerns on water quality.

I would also like to make a comment that – I see Mary is here too, representing the Georgian Bay Association – that all of the shoreline associations do a lot of testing throughout the summer months, and Keith Sherman's group does as well, and the health units.

And I would like to think that somehow all of those results would be brought together and that the members of the IJC committee would be aware of this, and hopefully we don't have to reinvent the wheel to find out exactly what is causing all of this, because the high E.coli counts in certain areas are not always evident as to what exactly is causing the problem.

In Tiny, we are doing our septic system testing, but we're not really sure how that…and how long that's going to take to clean up some of the water levels around our…well, we have more than 72 kilometres of shoreline in our area.

The other comment – and I know this is about water quality – but I also want to reiterate that that somehow needs to be tied into water levels going down as well, because we do know that the lowered water levels, we find the E.coli counts are higher, that's also impacting fish habitat.

I know in the area that I am in, the fish that normally spawn in the spring were not there at all this spring. So the declining water levels are definitely affecting them. Thank you.

HERB GRAY: Thank you very much. I now call to the microphone Mary Muter on behalf of the Georgian Bay Association.

MARY MUTER (Georgian Bay Association): Thank you, Mr. Gray. And for anybody who wants to learn more about our work on water levels, I have copies of our newsletter here, and I'll leave them up here and you're welcome to come and pick one up.

I have a Powerpoint presentation which I think is just being loaded up. And I also have a copy of the water quality reports that we do in conjunction with the Georgian Bay Association. You're welcome to look at that afterwards. So we're waiting for this to…

Okay, here we go. And I'm going to try and do this quickly because I'm going to try and do it in five minutes, but it's a lot of information.

So you get the picture here: what are we doing for cottage country? And basically, I think our message for the IJC is there are certainly hot spots in the Great Lakes, and Keith Sherman spoke to those, but I think more needs to be done what good water quality we (inaudible) in the Great Lakes.

And fortunately for us, in Georgian Bay, we do have areas of good water quality. However, it's seen as an area under intense pressure for development and it's an area of endless quantities of clean water, and certainly jurisdictions south of us are definitely interested in Georgian Bay water. So we need to keep an eye on that.

And as previously mentioned, low water levels definitely impact water quality, and I want to address that. Next slide please.

This is basically part of our satellite imagery. This is the hamlet of Honey Harbour. And you can see this is the hub, one of the hubs on the Georgian Bay coastline with intense development. The next hub north is Parry Sound. Under huge pressure, but this results in…this area right here is one of the busiest boating channels in Canada. Next slide.

I'm quickly going to go through some of the information from the water quality work that we do, both in the Township of Georgian Bay and similar work is done in the Township of the Archipelago. In this area, we have a network of 15 volunteers that are involved in water quality monitoring. Next slide.

This is Twelve Mile Bay, and it's sort of like a fjord cut through into the Precambrian shield coastline, and you can see that lower water levels can impact water quality big time in an area like this, and I'm going to outline that now for you. Next slide.

This is again Twelve Mile Bay, and you can see dense cottage development along the shorelines here. Next slide.

And here is the graph showing basically the amount of development here. These are 100-foot lots all along the shoreline. Next slide.

This is 2003. Chair Gray was talking about phosphorus loading, and here you can see, this is open Georgian Bay water with a phosphorus reading of about 5, and that's what we find, three to four to five is sort of normal phosphorus levels for open Georgian Bay water.

As you move down the Bay, phosphorus levels go up, so that down here at the end of the Bay, it's up to 16 on the surface water and 19 in the deep water. Again, this is 2003. Next slide.

By 2004, though, these numbers had gone up dramatically. Here, again still at 5, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, and in the deep water 42. Next slide.

What does this mean? Basically, here we've got…this yellow line is the thermacline. Once the warm temperatures set up in the summer, it is a dividing line between the warmer waters at the top and the cooler water. We have fish species that count on that cold water and enough oxygen for them to survive.

But in bays like this, this is what's happening. That yellow line is the thermacline, and you can see down here, very little oxygen in the water, so there is few fish, in fact none left. This is 2004.

(Inaudible) 2002, right at the thermacline, all of these little lines are fish. They were compressed into a very narrow area, but in 2002, they were still present. 2003 and 2004, they were gone. This is nutrient loading, and likely from intense development in the area. Next slide.

And again, this just shows the oxygen levels in June at a reasonable level. Anything over 2 mg/l, the fish can survive. But here, that blue line, we're getting down close to zero, by September 2005. So that's why there's no fish. Next slide.

And this is just another profile showing the same thing: June 2005, Twelve Mile Bay, September 2005. significant fish community here gone. And this is basically decomposing algae on the bottom which consumes oxygen, and therefore there are no fish there. Next slide.

Basically showing Twelve Mile Bay with a very narrow watershed. There is no other source really of rivers feeding into this bay that could be contributing to that. Next slide.

This is another bay with similar problems. I'm not going to go into the detail, but a bay with a narrow outlet here. Very little exchange of water, and with low water levels, even less water being exchanged. Next slide.

This is North Bay again from the air, and again you can see that's cottage development all along the shorelines. Next slide.

Same thing, North Bay. Those are actually a little bit bigger lots and there actually is some land here that's not developed, but still pretty dense development. Next slide.

And here are the phosphorus readings for North Bay. This is 2004, and you can see on the surface water…I can't read that number now…and the deep water, it's well over 200 here, and over 100 in the deep water here. Next slide.

This is North Bay, September 2004. No fish left in the water. 2002, a pretty good fish community and still some oxygen in the water for the fish to survive. Next slide.

This is just the outer part of that same bay, September 2004. No fish present. Next slide.

Just for comparisons, you know what a normal solar (?)…sun (?) stand looks like. This is McRae (?) Basin, which is very close to North Bay. In September 2004, a fairly good fish community there, good, high oxygen levels. 2002, still two years earlier, a good fish community and very similar oxygen levels. Next slide.

This is showing the same thing in North Bay, June 2005, August 2005, September 2005. By September, oxygen down to below 2. Next slide.

Same thing here. Basically, a movement of that blue line farther and farther over to the left. Next slide.

The same thing, June 2005, August 2005. No fish really at all in these deep waters. Next.

Another lake with similar conditions, a closed bay with very little water exchange, with low water levels, less water going in and out of that bay there. Next slide.

Same thing, June 2005. The blue line over here, fish community could still survive there, but by September, over here, less than 2. Next slide.

And this is what's happened in that bay. This is just this past summer. On the 4th of June 2005, pretty good fish community in this bay. By September, fish community gone. Next slide.

This is Sturgeon Bay. This is up in the Point-de-Barrel (?) area. In this bay (inaudible)...experienced unfortunately toxic bluegreen algae blooms. I don't know if people here understand what that means, but basically, bluegreen algae has formed in the bay.

This is a (inaudible) dish. This is how we measure how clear the water is, and that's what it looks like, and that's what these bars are. So normally, out here, you can read down to about 6 metres, but once you get into this bay, you're down to…I can't read what that is, but it's less than a metre in the bay, once

bluegreen algae forms, and you can only get it down about half that, a foot, and it becomes obscured, because the water is coloured that much. Next slide.

This is what the shorelines of Sturgeon Bay have looked like for three summers in a row. This summer actually was a little bit better. So this is what the shoreline has looked like in that bay.

Now I have to say that the Township of Archipelago has done a lot of work to try to help this community. If you can imagine (?), it has devalued properties here…and just show the next slide.

This is the…the local health unit has issued health advisories for these areas, and I think the IJC needs to consider this kind of thing happening. Basically, these notes were sent out to all of the residents.

To reduce the risk, the health unit has asked that the residents of the area refrain from using the bay waters as a source for drinking, bathing, dishwashing, or laundry, to avoid swimming in the water or any other recreational activity such as canoeing or water skiing that might result in ingesting water. Pet owners should also keep their pets away from the water.

UNIDENTIFIED: What Area of Concern?

MARY MUTER: Sturgeon Bay, near Point-de-Barrel. Basically, we want to understand better why bluegreen algae form in these areas and do what we can to prevent this from happening anywhere else and try to remediate an area like this. Next slide.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time here, but waterfront cottagers could see massive devaluation if water clarity is threatened again. This is what the shoreline looked like. Next slide.

This is showing some of the work that the Township has done in trying to get a better understanding of what's happening here, and this area does have a larger watershed, and they have done some research into determining what else could be contributing towards this. Yes, next slide.

In Sturgeon Bay, the basin, the sediment in the bottom, this is what it looks like. It ends up being a highly organic, basically sludge in the bottom of the bay. Next slide.

I think we've already seen this. In order to get a better understanding of what's been happening there this summer. Dr. Carl Schieffer (?), who does a lot of work with both of the townships, collected core sediment samples and they have gone off to a lab, and hopefully we can get some better understanding of what's happening here, historically and more recently. Next slide.

Okay, I'm going to pass this over, so that's the end of me. I'm going to pass this over to the next speaker, who is going to speak with us on aquaculture (?).

HERB GRAY: The next speaker I have is Peter Ketchem of the Township of Archipelago.

MARY MUTER: Do you want to shut this down and start this up again?

HERB GRAY: We're not shutting anything down. We'll hear everybody. But I announced that I'm going to recognize people in the order they signed. I announced that I am going to hear people in the order they signed in, so we'd be happy to hear the other speaker in due course. But the next name in my list is somebody you know well, Mary, Peter Ketchum of the Township of the Archipelago.

MARY MUTER: Yes, I know. Okay, we'll just have to turn this off, I guess, or whatever.

HERB GRAY: Give me the name of the person who will add to your presentation and that person will be heard. But I think in fairness, I should call on Peter Ketchum.

MARY MUTER: Did you (inaudible)...

UNIDENTIFIED: I did.

UNIDENTIFIED: Excuse me, Sir? Sir? Sir? Sir?

PETER KETCHUM (Township of Archipelago): Thank you, Chair Gray. Let me first introduce myself. I am Peter Ketchum, Reeve of the Township of the Archipelago, and I represent over 3,000 households that are situated along and in the Georgian Bay, part of an area known as the 30,000 Islands.

Our municipality is part of UNESCO's newly-recognized eastern Georgian Bay literal. Last year, it (inaudible)...the largest freshwater archipelago in the world.

Additionally, but unofficially, I have been given licence by the other West Parry Sound municipalities that front on the Georgian Bay to speak for them on areas of conservation and ecology in the bay.

We are all working on planning harmonization, an intermunicipal initiative of coastal municipalities directed at establishing leading-edge land use policies that ensure the ongoing protection of coastal values.

As well, the Township is the planning board for the unincorporated areas north of the northern boundary, up to Bing Inlet (?), and I presume I can speak for that area as well.

Therefore, I speak for about 80 miles of Georgian Bay coastline and islands. Over 85 per cent of our ratepayers are water-based. Further, over three times our land base is water. We really live in the water and all residents are concerned about water quality.

Our township was formed in 1980, with its primary goal being to govern and provide appropriate planning direction for a large coastal area of eastern Georgian Bay.

Specifically, we recognize that water resources are the most vital element of the Township's character, as provided by the clean water of Georgian Bay, and the protection of this water resource is of paramount concern.

Our residents are so committed to the Bay that they have urged us to invest in activities that are normally federal or provincial domains. Residents expect us

to encourage these governments to practice in our area the stewardship with which they have been entrusted, particularly with respect to water quality.

Our township, under a water quality consultant, uses over 20 volunteers to monitor water quality. Some years ago, we identified Sturgeon Bay as an area in stress, and now the Bay has poisonous green algae outbreaks in the fall of every year. Still, we are now discovering more areas that may be heading that way.

A municipality cannot act alone in facing environmental issues in the Great Lakes. We need substantial assistance from all levels of government.

Although the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Environment Canada have become involved, remedial work is not eligible for funding from Environment Canada. At present, Environment Canada only funds remediation for Areas of Concern under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

Our issue and concern is that evidence now indicates that Georgian Bay coastal areas are under increasing stress. I think all of us agree that activities to protect and conserve high-quality resources are always more economically efficient than attempting to remedy a degraded situation.

Our position is clear: start now to study this dangerous concern and take the necessary action as soon as practical before it's too late.

In summary, and in response to the IJC's four questions, we answer the following. What are the issues in your part of the basin and in the Great Lakes ecosystem as a whole that you want to see addressed?

Eutrification and nutrient enrichment, number one. Aquaculture, policy and ecological monitoring. And when I mention aquaculture, do you realize that Environment Canada and the Ministry of the Environment seem to have no interest in putting in, on the basis of one normal-sized aquaculture item, twice the amount of sewage as Midland. Not only are they condoning that, they are asking to increase that.

Watershed contaminants and pollutants inputs. Highlight high-quality environments and ecosystems, i.e. Georgian Bay wetlands and it needs resources to maintain it.

Is the Agreement effective in restoring and maintaining the waters of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem? Yes, the Agreement is a necessary and important tool for bilateral sharing and adoption of strong policies respecting water quality.

Does the Agreement deal with everything it should? In addition…our answer is in addition to Areas of Concern, efforts should be placed on maintaining high-quality areas. Georgian Bay is a high-quality area.

How should the public be involved in the review and implementation of the Agreement? The IJC is doing well with public involvement. Meetings should be relevant, educational and inclusive, and there should be public disclosure of recommended actions and the progress thereof.

So I thank you very much. I have in detail a much more…three copies of the Agreement…my presentation. Thank you very much.

HERB GRAY: Thank you very much. I think to make things go logically, I should call on Chris Skelton, on behalf of the Georgian Bay Association. He has words to give us on an important part of the subject we are discussing.

CHRIS SKELTON (Georgian Bay Association): Thank you, Mr. Gray. I am here representing the Georgian Bay Association, I'm on the Aquaculture Committee.

I'm also involved with the Eastern Georgian Bay North Channel Fishery Stewardship Committee. I live in Collingwood, in the southern end of Georgian Bay, and I have a recreational property in the northern end of Georgian Bay, at McGregor Bay, near Manitoulin Island.

I'd like to thank the IJC for the opportunity to participate in this review and also for their recognition of aquaculture as a stresser of water quality and its effects on nutrient loading and other impacts as described in the Guide to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement on page 19.

Our GBA Aquaculture Committee has been working very diligently for the last 10 years on these concerns regarding open-net-cage aquaculture in Georgian Bay, in the north channel.

We were pleased to be awarded a place on the agenda at the IJC biennial symposium in Kingston this past June, where our aquatic biologist, Dr. Carl Schieffer, along with Chief Glen Hare from Michigan First Nation and (inaudible)...from White Fish River First Nation, conducted a presentation regarding this subject.

This is a slide of the Depot Harbour (?) site near Parry Sound, typical of aquaculture operation. The majority of fish produced by Canadian freshwater aquaculture comes from the ten commercial open cage operations rearing Rainbow Trout in Georgian Bay, in the north channel.

Each of these operations has an average of ten of these large cages, each one which can hold up to 30,000 fish, and they're suspended in the usually clear and clean waters of oligotrophic or nutrient-poor waters of Ontario and Georgian Bay.

The largest of these operations is this one in Depot Harbour. These feed-lot operations rely on the public waters in which they're situated to assimilate or absorb the wastes that are produced by the great numbers of animals that are living in them, and thereby providing the businesses that operate them free sewage disposal.

The previous speakers, Mr. Ketchum (inaudible)...talked about or alluded to aquaculture and the role in nutrient enrichment and eutrification, and that's a great concern of ours.

We have managed – we being GBA – has managed to place these negative environmental impacts of this industry on the radar screen of many other equally concerned groups such as First Nations groups, Pollution Probe, the Sierra Legal Defence Fund, Ontario Nature, the David Suzuki Foundation, Great Lakes United, and others.

Our experience has shown that our government would be of little help in outlining to the IJC the true risks of such large-scale operations. For example, the MNR, the Ministry of Natural Resources, issues aquaculture licences to these operations.

The licence stipulates that (inaudible)...of fish over a certain amount must be reported to the MNR. There are no fines or penalties…

(TAPE CHANGES SIDES)

…conditions and that the operator in fact denied any escapements. We kept…continued calling and inquiring and finally, two months later, the operator did report a spill of no more than 2,000 fish.

Generally speaking, it's our experience that the district level staff of MNR will claim that they do not know of any effects, negative effects of these escapees on Canadian fish species.

However, higher-level MNR staff have admitted publicly that these effects are unknown. There's a kind of difference in semantics there. There has been no research to study the impacts of these escapes and there is no data available. Next slide please.

This huge fish was recently caught near McGregor Bay, near Manitoulin Island. It's a picture from the Manitoulin Expositor. It weighs 40 pounds. And they did some DNA testing on it and it is indeed an escapee from one of the fish farms up there.

These escapes happen routinely in the number of tens of thousands. The fish cages are basically a mesh bag that floats in the water. And at this time of year, with all of the great winds that we have and a storm sweeps in, it's not uncommon for the cages to be ripped apart and the fish escape.

It's quite obvious when you look at a fish of this size that that fish is going to have an impact on the native fish community. Fish are carnivores in the wild, they feed on other fish, insects, and crustaceans. When raised industrially, they are fed pellets comprised of fishmeal.

And this is tying this fish operation back into the idea of nutrient loading. Fishmeal is often used as a garden fertilizer because it's high in phosphorus, and phosphorus is a limiting factor in algae growth and the aquatic ecosystem; when there's a lot of phosphorus, you get an algae (inaudible).

The fish, when they eat the fishmeal which is high and phosphorus, excrete a lot of it and it gets into the environment. The fish cage operation is open, it's an open system, and so that phosphorus gets into the water.

So when we're talking about concerns about nutrient enrichment and eutrification, we should be talking about aquaculture, open-cage aquaculture. Next slide please.

Here is a diagram of two types of aquaculture operations. The one on the left is the open-cage system that I have been describing. The fish are held in a large net cage or a bag.

The food goes in the top of the cage, the fish eat it. They just excrete feces which falls through the bottom of the cage. Waste food and running from food also falls through the bottom of the cage, and all of the nutrients that aren't absorbed by the fish are excreted to the environment.

The diagram on the right is a closed system where the water is recirculated through a tank, basically, and the nutrients are captured and they can be actually used as byproducts, for example garden fertilizer.

In addition to nutrients escaping from this open system, antibiotics that are used to control the diseases that can run rampant when you crowd many, many fish together, those antibiotics can also escape into the environment and into the water.

Georgian Bay and the North Channel, more so than, say, Lake Erie or Lake Ontario, are seen as ideal for the expansion of the fish cage industry because the water, the background level of nutrients in the water is very low.

The open, off-shore areas of Georgian Bay are oligotrophic, they are low in nutrients and high in dissolved oxygen. They are rather unique in this world and in increasingly rare quality, but these rare qualities also give the water a high assimilative capacity. It can absorb a lot of nutrients before you see situations like, say, Sturgeon Bay.

The government, rather than imposing a limit to the relative change in phosphorus levels in the water around these fishing cage operations, they've prescribed an absolute limit.

In other words, the province is encouraging the industry to locate their operations where the background levels of nutrients are very low. So in other words, the government is telling the operators to fine the cleanest, purest water, because (inaudible)...pollute it, if I can put it that simply.

Without any direction from the public, the province has given this industry free use of a Great Lakes water resource for unlimited supply of fresh water and free disposal of its waste and unrecoverable products, byproducts.

Unlike any other industry or farming activity, open-net cage aquaculture is given sole rights of this public resource to generate profits. We call this form of food production dirty aquaculture. Next slide please.

This photo was used by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario in his recently released annual report. It shows the site of a former cage operation in the Lacloche (?) Channel, which is near Manitoulin Island.

It was taken during the spring thaw of last season and it shows that after seven years of having removed fish cages, the ice still does not form. It's kind of hard to make out, but this…the sort of white background around those eight black blobs is ice, spring ice, and the round circles are the former sites of fish cages.

And what's happening here and what this photo shows is the biological activity of decomposition of the fish waste and the food that's fallen to the bottom is decomposing, creating methane, creating a current and keeping the ice clear in the areas over the former fish cages or under the former fish cages.

It’s quite obvious that there is an impact. And if a fish farm operation is located out in the open water, where there is more current, there is more dilution of the pollution, then this kind of thing might not be so obvious.

But just because it’s in a different place, it doesn’t mean the same amount of nutrients are going into the water, it’s just diluted over a broader area. This is an example of where it’s a little more concentrated. No less pollution is going into the water than in other locations.

Despite the obvious warning demonstrated by this site in the Lacloche Channel, both our federal government and provincial government are working cooperatively to streamline the rather complicated and lengthy process for aquaculture licensing in order to promote the growth of this industry in Canada’s freshwater lakes.

In this day and age, we find it kind of hard to believe. We’re trying to reduce problems like Sturgeon Bay, and the government, on the other hand, is promoting an industry that is obviously likely to contribute to the problem.

Not too long ago, in my home town of Collingwood, it was announced with great excitement that we were being de-listed as an Area of Concern under a Remedial Action Program.

A lot of effort was put into getting our harbour de-listed; it’s incredible to believe that we are asking for trouble by promoting an industry like aquaculture when we’re also trying to clean up hot spots and problem areas.

There are proven alternative methods of rearing fish for protein consumption, and this clean aquaculture has been undertaken for centuries and centuries.

These operations range from simple earth (?) and ponds to flow-through raceways to tanks with recirculating aquaculture water treatment systems. More than 90 per cent of water in a recirculating system can be treated, pumped back into these tanks, recycled and the waste products used as fertilizer, for example.

We see this as clean aquaculture, and this is the kind of aquaculture that the government should be supporting.

In the end, I'd just like to finish up with a warning that Dr. David Suzuki gave in his keynote address to the IJC delegation this past year. To quote him, "If you're going to allow open-net cage (inaudible) in Georgian Bay, which has not got anything like the kinds of currents and water movement that we have in the ocean, you're in for big trouble.

But I think if you don't stop it now and demand closed containment systems, there are going to be huge problems. And I appeal to the members of the IJC to look at this very carefully because the evidence is in for the salmon (?) aquaculture in the oceans." Thank you.

HERB GRAY: Thank you very much. I hope you have a copy of your text…

CHRIS SKELTON: Yes.

HERB GRAY: (inaudible)...recorded. We hope you'll have a copy of your text, though everything is being recorded. Now I want to just clarify something here.

We have two people here from the Simcoe-Muskoka (inaudible)...most welcome, Marina Whelan and Bernard Maheu, and they did not indicate they wished to speak, although they said they wished to receive information by e-mail.

So I don't know if they forgot to mark that they wished to speak or they just want to note that they're present and following the proceedings. I'm not pushing them to come to the microphone, I just want to make sure we're not being unfair in any way.

BERNARD MAHEU: No, we hadn't planned on speaking.

HERB GRAY: Okay. Well, we have heard, I think, from seven people, Mr. Keat…

STEPHEN KEAT (Senior Advisor, U.S. Section, International Joint Commission): Umm…

HERB GRAY: And we're at 8:00…

STEPHEN KEAT: And we've had a few more, so (inaudible)..

HERB GRAY: And some have been added. So I'd like to ask everybody to really keep your comments to under five minutes so that we can hear everybody and not keep people too long. Some may have driven a long way to get here.

So the next speaker is Robert Coulas (?) of the Severn Sound PAC. He'll be followed by Patricia Taylor, of Penetanguishine. So Mr. Coulas, can you come to the microphone please?

ROBERT COULAS (Severn Sound PAC): Thank you very much, Chair Gray. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. The Severn Sound PAC, Public Advisory Committee, has been acting with Severn Sound Remedial Action Plan from its inception.

I follow in the footsteps, as the chairperson, with Bob Whittom (?), Millen Dick (?), Duncan Feran (?). And tonight, I'd just like to actually address some of the concerns that the PAC has actually been looking at, mainly from the point of view of having people come in, scientific experts of people associated with the Severn Sound Environmental Association, giving their expert views of what's happening in Severn Sound.

The comments, the first six comments actually all relate to what I am going to address. And I guess my main concern is looking at initially the Great Lakes Water Quality Act (sic) and how it is actually set up and how it functioned through the RAP process that went out through the Severn Sound area and the Collingwood area.

And then I also want to sort of follow through with that and look at the scientific process and how it's actually being incorporated with the Great Lakes Water Quality Act.

My concern is that we actually have, in Georgian Bay, two Areas of Concern that are being de-listed, yet at the same time we have individuals that are coming up to the podium and talking about new issues, new concerns that are probably just as valid as what we have seen in the last 20 years.

Where does that leave us with how the Great Lakes Water Quality Act is working right now for us? Is that going to actually help us if we don't have identified Areas of Concern? And yet, at the same time, Sturgeon Bay is probably looking at another eutrophic situation.

And so looking at my experience, I just want to give you an idea, when we were going through the de-listing process here in Severn Sound, one of our main concerns, one of the objectives was to look at fish populations.

We had seen a lot of recovery in terms of water quality. We had seen nutrient loadings being taken down. We had seen changes with plankton communities, diversity was up.

And so things were responding very well, but we hadn't seen sport fishery populations coming back. And as an objective, it was a little bit of concern… and as a PAC, we were wondering can this actually be accepted?

And we went through with the de-listing process mainly from the standpoint that we quickly realized that our objective was set back ten years ago and it didn't really give us the flexibility to address zebra mussels, which actually changed the ecosystem, and it didn't allow to actually address the possibility that maybe we're never going to have the fish populations that we had in the past.

And so what I really want to address as my first concern is can the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement be flexible enough so that when we actually have new issues of concern creep into our Areas of Concern, or throughout the entire Great Lakes, can the IJC recognize that as another way of addressing and, I guess, identifying other areas that need to de-listed, if they even have to be de-listed?

Let's talk about just even health issue, the health problems. And that leads into my second concern, looking at the scientific process, the scientific approach. The Great Lakes Water Quality Act is essentially prescriptive.

And in fact, you can use the analogy that we're looking at our body as a healthy system. If we go to the doctor and we have an ache or a pain or some sort of symptom, it's…try to treat it in some way. And that's what we have been doing with the Great Lakes Water Quality Act, is we have identified a series of symptoms.

But more and more, we're starting to realize that how we handle ourselves, how we look at our own health is that we actually have to have information, we have to have baseline information, we have to actually have comparisons.

And I really want to emphasize that the IJC, hopefully they can maintain monitoring. And I heard that mentioned over and over again the last few comments, is that monitoring is integral to maintaining some sort of baseline, knowing where we sit with water quality, but it also allows us to address changes that may be taking place.

If we do have a new invasive species, which seems, in the last ten years, we've had at least three major invasive species that have entered into the Severn Sound area, let alone other areas that we are looking at within Georgian Bay, and we need to be able to use some sort of scientific method to maintain that baseline.

And what I have seen in the last five years, based on government funding, is that we are not getting this funding to actually support monitoring. Monitoring is always the last thing to be thought of. We always address symptoms, we always address problems, and we try to actually band-aid those problems.

But when it really comes down to it, we need to be able to support those monitoring initiatives. If we don't support those monitoring initiatives, we won't be able to see future problems that are coming down the pipe.

And for, I guess, a pun that I'm looking at, is that emerging new toxins are out there. We don't even know the implications of aquaculture. So how can we actually look at that…well, we know, scientifically, to look at ecology as a tool to see if our system is changing.

And if our system is changing, at least we know that there is something going on. We can address those issues with further detail, further research. But using this baseline, it allows us to at least address the problems before they get out of control and before they actually become too complicated.

So just to sort of summarize, I'd like to see the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement with at least some flexibility in the future to not only look at issues of concern and objectives, setting objectives, but also Areas of Concern that may be

changing, so that we don't have necessarily a situation where there's funding being channelled to one Area of Concern and then we somehow remediate that, and then we see, just further up the road, that we're emerging with a new Area of Concern, but it can't be addressed through the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, and then to address the scientific approach and maintain some sort of coordinated effort through the IJC to allow for monitoring to be fundamental to our process of managing the Great Lakes.

We cannot actually maintain monitoring. We can't actually look at what's going to be coming down the pipe. And I know we've had guest speakers with the Public Advisory Committee such as Dr. Pat Chow-Fraser talk about how Georgian Bay has some of the best coastline wetlands, and these wetlands are being lost as more and more development takes place. And if we use that as a monitoring status or standard, we will quickly realize how we're going to lose habitat.

And just as a side note, from my experience with ecology and doing some research, aside from invasive species, one of the greatest threats to any ecological system is habitat loss. And you can have invasive species changing an ecosystem, but if you lose habitat, it's very, I guess, rare to see it restore. You can remediate, you can try to bring it back to a natural state, but we rarely actually restore lost habitat. Thank you.

HERB GRAY: Thank you very much. I now call on Patricia Taylor, of Penetanguishine, followed by Frances Ashenhurst (?), member of the Eadmore (?) Georgian Heights Beach Association.

PATRICIA TAYLOR (Georgian Highlands Ratepayers Association): Thank you, Mr. Gray. I am here really as a representative from the Georgian Highlands Ratepayers Association.

I have enjoyed the St. Lawrence from Long Sault to the Thousand Islands, with recreational water experience and had a great time during the 60s, then moved to Montreal, where we sold our boat and equipment because of the pollution.

For the past 22 years, I've lived at the north end of Tiny Township, where the Christian Straight runs just north of Christian Island, and was delighted with the water quality and, of course the view and everything else.

But over the last 22 years, we have had more development and we are having more development still, with the clearing of the bush, the trees, the woods, and lots being developed and roads put through.

And my grandchildren now have what's called swimmer's itch; they may swim from April until October. I swim maybe from June until the end of August, and this year, for the first time, I've had swimmer's itch. And we're all buying witch hazel and putting it on ourselves to stop the itching all night for three days to a week.

There has been quite the deterioration. And what is quite shocking is I can go down to the water the next morning and the water is lower, so it's a great concern, what's happening.

We do test our water throughout the summer, and this year we've had higher counts than we've ever had before, although it's supposedly better than a lot of other places.

So we want to know what can we tell our ratepayers. Of course, everybody wants (inaudible)…and the whole works, it's not a cottage anymore, but we've got to understand that we're going to ruin it all for our future generations and our grandchildren unless we can get together and do something to stop this. Thank you.

HERB GRAY: Thank you very much. Now, Frances Ashenhurst, and she'll be followed by Donald Kerr, of the Blue Mountain Watershed Trust.

FRANCES ASHENHURST: Thank you, Mr. Gray. I live at Tiny Township, between (inaudible)…

UNIDENTIFIED: We can't hear you…put the mic down.

UNIDENTIFIED: Lower your mic a little bit.

FRANCES ASHENHURST: I live in Tiny Township, between (inaudible) and Concession Three. And every year in April, I notice this bloom (?) of water coming out of (inaudible) side of the river into the bay, and as it advances up Georgian Bay, it gets caught up with the (inaudible)…and settles in our area.

And when we go out to swim in the summertime, we are ankle-deep in this mud. And I would like to know what's there, what's gotten into our bay. We have some swimmer's itch as well, so perhaps it's not such good stuff.

Another concern I've had in the last few years is Tiny Township's wisdom with a new building and the development behind us, is putting storm sewers directly into our bay, and I question the stormwater management today, that there isn't a better system than directly putting these huge storm sewers into our bay, where leaves (inaudible) twigs and God knows what else washed off the highways and rolls (?) into it.

Also, because Strathpoint (?) is a very rocky area, the water level has deteriorated and has come (?) all over, and the rocks are now bare. And the Canada geese have found a new home. And I believe that they are beginning to pollute our water a lot as well.

And I just wanted to address these concerns. Thank you very much.

HERB GRAY: Thank you. Now I would call Donald Kerr to the microphone, followed by Paul Dubile, of the Midland Tours Incorporated Canadian…

PAUL DUBILE: Passenger vessels.

HERB GRAY: (inaudible)…tell us what he's doing beyond Midland Tours.

PAUL DUBILE: Passenger vessels. Passenger vessels. Passenger Vessel Association.

HERB GRAY: Thank you.

DON KERR (Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation): I'm Don Kerr of the Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation. Norm (inaudible) and I are here representing our organization.

It is a watershed organization, and one of the things we recommend is that as much as possible, government and non-government organizations should organize on a watershed basis.

We are here as interested observers. We're not prepared to give any specific recommendations. But our mayor of Collingwood, Mayor Geddes, is very much involved in the Great Lakes Initiative, and I heartily endorse the cooperation that has been suggested, that is needed between the Great Lakes Mayors Initiative or the Great Lakes Cities Initiative and the IJC.

Also, Norm is going to talk about the last remaining coastal wetland on Georgian Bay, and we would, I guess, endorse that as much as possible, the shorelines of the Great Lakes should be retained in their natural state for the protection of the Lakes and for biodiversity.

I think that's about all I need to say today, and Norm can fill (inaudible)…

HERB GRAY: Thank you very much. And now, Mr. Dubile, on behalf of the Canadian Passenger Vessel Association and Midland Tours.

PAUL DUBEAU (Passenger Vessel Association and Midland Tours): A little correct…it's Paul Debeau, French.

HERB GRAY: Oh, I'm sorry…I'm sorry, my ability to read handwriting is not very good, and my own handwriting isn't very good enough, I can't read it, so I apologize.

UNIDENTIFIED: Did you have another birthday?

HERB GRAY: Hmmm?

UNIDENTIFIED: Did you have another birthday? (LAUGHS)

HERB GRAY: Okay, Mr. Dubeau.

PAUL DUBEAU: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Paul Dubeau. I represent two organizations here this evening. One is the Midland Tours, which operates a passenger vessel out of the Midland area and the lower part of Georgian Bay, and I also represent the Canadian Passenger Vessel Association, which we have approximately 80 members across Canada, from coast to coast.

I will start off tonight by thanking Mr. Gray and his representative from the IJC to let me speak here. I am sorry, I got a little misunderstood. I thought there was water levels going to be discussed at this meeting, as opposed to water quality.

But from what I've heard so far, it appears that if we don't have the water, you're going to have a problem with the ecology (?). But if you have the water, you're going to (inaudible)…and you don't have the problem with your stagnant water. Is that correct? Is that correct? Does it go hand and hand, yes or no?

UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

PAUL DUBEAU: It does, it does, okay. So right now, we've gotten ourselves into a problem as a result of dredging that was done in the St. Clair River back in the 1960s. They dredged the level to 27 feet.

Now my question is…I'm starting out my program here by saying why was the dredging being done initially? That's one question. Was any kind of modelling, testing done prior to the dredging?

Who put the pressure on the IJC or Canada and the U.S. to do the dredging? Was it Algoma Steel, CSL? Who was it? Was it the major shipping companies in Canada and the United States?

Now I have the numbers of present-day shipping that go up and down the St. Clair River (inaudible)…numbers today as opposed to 1960, I guarantee you they're a fraction of what's happened.

So you and the ecology people are suffering because they dredged that river, lowered the water levels in our area, in our basin, and as a result, you're having the problem that you're having (inaudible)…hot spots.

Okay, I have a bit of background here. I'm not talking off the cuff. I spent about 30 years with the federal government working in different aspects of water, i.e. I've spent four years with the Hydrographic Services doing ships navigation charting on the St. Lawrence River, Lake Ontario, Prince Edward Waterway, the upper part of the Georgian Bay from Port Severn to Killarney, the Muskoka Lakes, and four part in the eastern Arctic doing hydrographic surveys.

I left that department, I went and I spent four years up in northwestern Ontario doing a water power diversion scheme, diverting water from Hudram (?) Lake in Manitoba into Hudson Bay. After the project was completed, the government, in…I think it was 1966, decided to go nuclear, so it was scrapped.

I then applied for a position in Vancouver, for which I was one of the successful candidates out of seven. I spent seven years doing water planning, management, surveys, in British Columbia.

The areas I looked after were north and south Thompson, the Fraser River, and also our department represented Canada on the IJC with the Columbia River Treaty program. That project, as a result, was to guarantee the U.S., in Washington State, the power generating stations, the amount of water that was needed to operate properly.

I spent four months on a study in the Crescent Valley area, which is just north of the U.S. border, where the Americans had applied through the IJC to change the water distribution in the Columbia River.

With my results passed onto the people in Ottawa, the Americans had to cancel the project, because it was going to do what you've got now in the St. Clair River, damaging of the river bottom, causing erosion, causing the problem that we are faced with now.

So that's part of my background, okay. Since I retired, I am now with the Midland Tours, I am a captain on two of our vessels. My problem today is the last trip I took out of the southern part of the area here, in the Delawan (?) area, I

come over a shoal…I wouldn't say a shoal, but a spike on my radar, my sounder, three feet of water under my keel. Now I'm drawing between, say, 5-5.5 feet. Well, I'll tell you, I'm going to get a little scared if that water goes down any more.

And as a result…the reason I got involved with this, I found this article in the paper, Tiny (inaudible), which gives me a pretty good picture of what is happening with the lakes. So therefore, I say, we've got a problem from the navigational system, you guys have got a problem because of your ecological system, correct? Okay.

The other side of the coin I represent tonight, because I am vice-president of the Canadian Passenger Vessel Association, as I indicated. We presently have, as I said earlier, about 80 members across Canada. Three of those 80 members are on the southern part of Georgian Bay: Midland Tours being one, Steve Robillard and the Georgian Queen in Penetang, and also we have Ron Anderson in the Parry Sound area.

Now with the water levels dropping, which is affecting you people, already, Mr. Robillard, our member out of Penetang, has had to alter his sightseeing tour.

If I, in the case of the Miss Midland, the ship that I look after, if that water gets below three feet, I am going to be concerned with going through that bloody channel because I could (inaudible)…prop up or whatever the problem is.

I talked to Mr. Anderson the other day up in Parry Sound. He has a passenger vessel that carries 550 people. He said, Paul, the water goes down, I can handle it, but I'll have to change my routing, which cuts (?) them the picturesque part of the Parry Sound area. That was his concern. He said he can live with the water going down, but he doesn't have to change his routing.

So the people that are coming into town, into the area…like, for example, do you realize that Midland Tours bring in the area of 50,000 people into this town right here? 50,000 people! And they sure don't drive in and drive out, they don't spend any money here, correct?

And I am sure Mr. Anderson…if Ron was here, he'd say the same thing about Parry Sound. If he's carrying…I'm sure his numbers are probably double that because of the amount of trips he has. But there is money being left in Parry Sound.

And with Steve in Penetang, the people coming in to do a cruise on Steve's boat, they're going to see Captain Roberts or the theatre up at…the King's Wharf Theatre.

Our industry, tourism, is bringing money into this area. So we've got to go hand in hand. Get the water levels up, we're safer, the water levels are going to move…that Twelve Mile Bay channel, I've worked up in that area. It's going to flush that system out, which it doesn't have the capability of doing today the way the water is.

So in that light, I thank you for giving me the time. I'll give you my notes here, but they're a little scratched on. (LAUGHS) Thank you very much.

HERB GRAY: Okay. I'm now going to call on Norman Windgrove, Blue Mountain Watershed Trust, and he'll be followed by Ann Ritchie-Nagoose – I may have pronounced her name wrong to, from Stop Site 41.

While Mr. Windgrove is coming to the microphone, I want to reply to Mr. Dubeau with just a fact. As far as I'm aware, it wasn't the IJC that did the dredging. The IJC is not an operational organization. It carries out studies at the request of governments, it makes recommendations to governments and the public.

The dredging, as far as I'm aware, was carried out by the U.S. Corps of Engineers. And I'm sure we'll be hearing a lot more about it if the two governments agree to fund our upper lakes study, which has been revised to incorporate this issue. Over to you.

NORMAN WINDGROVE (Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation): Thank you, Chair Gray, ladies and gentlemen. The Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation is a volunteer group, a grassroots organization, a non-governmental. And we're an environmental group, and we've been in operation in the Collingwood area for about ten years.

One of the municipalities that draws its drinking water from Georgian Bay…in fact, I brought some with me tonight, this is Georgian Bay water right now.

So we are concerned with the water quality, and again, we have concerns…we're working with the Town of Collingwood. Mayor Geddes and council have been very cooperative, and we're working on the preservation of one of the last remaining wetlands on the shores of southern Georgian Bay, called the Silver Creek wetlands. And we think we are being successful, we are making great progress.

So I just wanted to say that we support the concern for the disappearance of the wetland and the shorelines. What we have left is not a lot and we need to protect it.

And my second point, Chair Gray, is that I support the position of the Severn Sound Environmental Organization regarding the chemical contaminants in the Great Lakes. Some of the chemicals are very persistent.

And to give you a bit of personal experience, I grew up in southern Ontario, in Norfolk County, not too far from the shores of Lake Erie. And my father had a farm, a tobacco farm, and one of the things that he had to get rid of pests on the crop, and originally we used arsenic of lead, which we sprayed on the tobacco.

Well, then, Agriculture Canada and the crop experts said we have some great new thing here, this is really good. You won't have to spray it on your crops (inaudible)…spraying it on your crops, it can be dropped from an airplane, and it will work on your pests. And this wonderful stuff, it's called DDT.

So I think we have to keep our eyes open because there's a lot of new chemical compounds that are coming down the pipe, we have to make sure that we're aware of these things and we can control these things and keep them out of our Great Lakes water. Thank you.

HERB GRAY: Thank you very much. I next call on Ann Ritchie-Nagoose of Stop Site 41, followed by Judy Contin of Midland. And Ann (inaudible)…from Elmvale.

ANN RITCHIE-NAGOOSE (Stop Site 41): that's correct. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Gray. I am very please to hear a lot of the other events that are going on in our area.

These public processes should be open and complete (?) in many regards; I think they would be helpful in preventing the very issues that all of us are concerned about.

I am a private citizen, really. It's my concerns I'd like to share this evening. I am a resident of Tiny Township. I reside and happily reside the Tiny Marsh, just north of Elmvale.

I have grave concerns regarding Site 41, Simcoe County's proposed landfill. This undertaking by Simcoe County was turned down at the first environmental assessment hearing, and they have not, after 20 years, received an adequate vote of approval from the Ministry of the Environment.

This proposal is located on the floodplains (inaudible)…aquifers and will have to be de-watered at an estimated rate of as much as 540,000 litres per day.

Class 1 and 2 farmland is also present at this site. My husband and I are actually dairy farmers in this area and the land use issue is a prevalent concern to me as well.

This site (inaudible)…upward gradients. Simcoe County has informed me, when I first got involved, that this is what is going to protect the water, is this hard, large volume of water underneath the ground is going to stop any contaminants from leaching in. This is when I first got involved.

This is not reasonable, in my mind. We take very strong initiatives to protect our area from our cattle, and the manure, that we raise. We have a dairy farm of about 55 cows. We cemented our manure pit and we take precautions that we do not spread in areas such as this and not at all in the winter or fall.

Again, is this reasonable, that we are allowing projects like this to happen? When will our governments stop projects that put the most at risk? Dilution of contaminants is what I am hearing at Site 41.

Many of Simcoe County councillors…maybe address me as a NIMBY. I consider myself a concerned citizen that has a stake in this. And to address that concern, if any of you are thinking that, I would like to inform you that the Environment Commissioner of Ontario has spoken out strongly in his report of 2004 against this project, Nature Canada has spoken out against this project, Severn Suzuki and David Suzuki have spoken out against this project as a shameful waste of natural resources. Over 700 signs grace the properties of people concerned in our area.

So I'm not really sure…obviously this isn't in Georgian Bay, but the head waters of McDonald Creek (?) is attached to the site and it's where they are de-watering, which in turn drains into the Wine Marsh (?) and into Georgian Bay.

We all know that sewage treatment plants and landfills are one of the top polluters in Ontario and Canada.

I'd like to express my thank you for having given me the opportunity to speak this evening, and I'd like to put in a more formal summary into your office. Thank you.

HERB GRAY: I can say that driving up here from Toronto, we certainly saw the Site 41 signs. (LAUGHS) And I also want to say that last June, we sent a letter to the Ontario Ministry of the Environment asking to be informed of their position and what they are doing, and you might well have the same information we received from the Deputy Minister, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, we'll share this correspondence with the Site 41 group. Now I now want to call on Judy Cantin.

JUDY CONTIN (Councillor, Town of Midland): Thank you, Chairman Gray. I am a councillor here with the Town of Midland.

And I hadn't actually come up tonight expecting to speak, but there was just something that sort of tweaked my interest when we look at water quality.

And the area that's most familiar with the greatest number of our residents would be the littoral area or the shoreline. And a common, and perhaps it's a

nuisance, but I think there is a chance that it's a threat to our water quality, and it was alluded to by this lady from the beach areas, the Canada geese.

I recognize that they are a majestic, very well protected species, and their numbers are sort of…certainly a concern to the residents of our community. And I don't think that we're unique.

Our community has recently convened an area information session where we brought in a specialist to speak to the issue about managing the geese populations, and we invited the southern Georgian Bay North Simcoe…our neighbouring municipalities.

And I guess what we learned at that presentation was that we really need to have a coordinated and an effort that's put forth by neighbours, that neighbours have to deal with this, you can't chase the geese from out of your area because they'll go into your neighbours' property.

We could perhaps ask them to stay a little longer on their winter vacation down in the States, but I'm not sure that… (LAUGHS)

(TAPE CHANGES SIDES)

HERB GRAY: …at 9:00. If there are people in the audience who have listened to the presentations and as a result, it inspired a desire to make a short comment, I certainly think that we would all agree that they should be invited to the microphone.

So if there are people who would like to come up…of course, we want to record your name and address and any organization you represent. And we won't

insist on it, but I'll be like the auctioneer you see on TV. You know, he yells out, going once, going twice, going three times. (LAUGHS)

So before I do that, I see a gentleman in the back, so come forward, please. And as I say, we have 20 minutes for short interventions and statements, and we welcome comments from people who may not have felt they wanted to say something when they came in but would like to add a comment before we adjourn.

DON ERKHART: Thank you, Chair Gray. I am representing Professor Jack (inaudible), who is in Germany right now He would be here…

HERB GRAY: Your name, Sir?

DON ERKHART: My name is Don Erkhart. I'm a resident of Midland and I have 70 years' experience on the shorelines. Just one point. I think many great points were made tonight and good questions and good presentations. Excellent, excellent.

One comment not made: development is irrevocable. We have development, rampant development all around the Great Lakes. We have monster houses being built on 50-foot lots. Some larger than that, but many of them go out 50 feet, and some narrower than that.

And they all…most of them I'm familiar with (inaudible) own septic systems. If septic systems, and I'd ask this question, are so successfully employed on a 50-foot lot, does it not seem strange that a city like Toronto, for example, does not use septic systems? Thank you. (LAUGHS)

HERB GRAY: Thank you very much. Is there someone else who would like to come forward and make a brief comment? We certainly have time for that. Yes, Sir? Please step forward and start out giving your name and where you live and any organization you're connected with.

MURRAY PORTER: Lots of organizations, but not ones to do with this. My name is Murray Porter and I am a citizen of Midland. And my question is a very simple one.

Many of us, in our ignorance, wonder why the water seems to be so much lower, and we heard tonight comments that sounded to me fairly well informed, that the amount of water you have relates to the quality of the water you have.

Our question is simply this, out of our ignorance: how much water goes south? Do you have any idea? Besides what's been happening, we have been told about, in the St. Clair River with the dredging.

But is there any other water that leaves Canada and heads down to the States? I know it's certainly proposed. Can you answer that?

HERB GRAY: Prior to the signing of the Boundary Waters Treaty in 1909 and the Commission being created by and starting in 1911, there was a grandfathered…the Chicago drainage and barge canal, and the amount it can take out has been fixed by a decision of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Now it's said that that amount of water is balanced by an inflow into Lake Superior by the diversion of Lake Obegon (?) and the Severn River. This was

something done during the Second World War to provide water for additional power to the war production.

So I'm told and it's generally understood that what goes out of the Chicago sanitary and barge canal is matched by what comes in through the diversion I mentioned.

There may also be very tiny amounts going out through the former…the Erie Canal, built in the 1820s, from Lake Erie or Lake Ontario.

Now how much actually goes out…there's something else. Of course, the water drains into the Atlantic Ocean through the St. Lawrence. And I think, if you have this guide, there is a page full of facts, and I'm not sure if it says something…I'm not sure if this page…

I'm not sure if this page says something about the flow of water into the St. Lawrence, but there is an amount obviously that's been going out of the Great Lakes through the St. Lawrence since the Ice Age.

Now I just want to end this comment by saying one of the issues that governments and the IJC will have to continue working on is how much of the water levels issue is cyclical, carried out by Mother Nature, and how much is man-made.

It's been generally understood that where attempts have been made to regulate levels in the Great Lakes, for example the control orders at the international section of the St. Lawrence between Cornwall and Massena and at the Sault, the St. Mary's River, further up from here, then you have a certain

effect, but they can't overcome in either direction the full effects of Mother Nature.

And speaking as someone who has spent his entire life, like many of you, on the Great Lakes – quite apart from my official positions, I grew up on the shores of the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair, close to Lake Erie – it wasn't long ago, in the 1980s, everybody was in a panic about high water levels, and there were major investigations and calls on government to do something about the high water levels.

And now, of course, in recent years there has been a low water level period. There has been some recovery, but not, I guess, to the baseline level across the Lakes.

So we can debate more than we have time for about how much of what's been happening has been cyclical and how much has been man-made. Oh, here we go…I hope you'll take this Guide to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement with you.

And I think your mayor wants to say something, and I always listen to mayors. But it says here only 1 per cent of Great Lakes water actually flows out of the system each year.

Because of this, water will stay in Lake Superior for up to 191 years, 99 years in Lake Michigan, 22 in Lake Huron, 6 in Lake Ontario, and 2.6 in Lake Erie.

And (inaudible)…the text says this means that pollution can stay in the Lakes waters for many generations, another fact that our Commission determined in its report in the year 2000 on whether bulk water removals should be allowed from the Lakes, and we found that only 1 per cent per year was renewed by snow melt and precipitation. And we said that to the government bulk water removals from the Great Lakes is not a good idea and should not be permitted.

Anyway, Mr. Mayor, can I call you back to the microphone?

GEORGE J. MACDONALD: Just a quick question, Mr. Gray. As a mayor, I sit on the (inaudible) County upper tier. Some years ago, we built a Honda plant in Alliston. And after the Honda plant got proposed for Alliston, there was found there was no water to supply the plant.

So you know where the water is coming from – they built a pipeline from Georgian Bay to Alliston to service the Honda plant. Yes, that created jobs, all of the things that go along with that, I understand all that.

But now, the question comes now: extend the water pipe to York region. I was down in York region this afternoon and talked about development and that sort of thing. They don't have water in York region.

So you know what's going to happen, is extend the water pipe to York region, then process it through the waste treatment plant and sent us that stuff back to put in Georgian Bay.

That's got to be…I'm not sure, and the question is is the water in Georgian Bay for sale? Can they just pipe it away to York region for sale without any

monetary replacement? And you can't…money won't replace the water in Georgian Bay, so I don't care how much they pay for it, I don't think it should be allowed to happen. (APPLAUSE)

HERB GRAY: I can only provide you with a partial answer. You raised the important issue of in-basin consumptive uses. We're dealing with water that crosses an international boundary, and the Boundary Waters Treaty, as the name applies, deals with the waters not just in the Great Lakes, but all along the international boundary, from east to west, including in the north, that is shared between Canada and the United States.

And we're dealing here with consumptive uses within the basin, and I don't think that the Boundary Waters Treaty applies to in-basin consumptive uses.

I would urge you to raise this with your provincial members, and you have one of your federal members here, and maybe Mary wants to add a piece of information. Now that…this is like House of Commons, we're having supplementary questions. (LAUGHS) I hope you don't adopt some nether habits of the House of Commons.

UNIDENTIFIED: We're not as noisy.

MARY MUTER: I just want you to know that that moving down into York region is a diversion of water from Georgian Bay. That's outside of Georgian Bay's watershed. And GBA, in the past, has stopped a diversion of

water from Georgian Bay to York and we will oppose it again if they try it again, just so you know.

UNIDENTIFIED: Well, we've got several mayors here, too, Mary (inaudible)…Mr. Mayor here, and Mayor Kennedy. The mayors up here should be making the same plea to the provincial government (inaudible)…

MARY MUTER: Yes, yeah, that's right. Out of our watershed, we just will not allow it. And you're right, money won't replace that water, it doesn't matter how much money they pay.

I just want to make one other comment. We've passed around our newsletters. Just so the people that have also made the connection between water quantity and water quality, we have made that link, obviously.

And you can go to our Web site and download the Baird Report. It's a report that was funded by our foundation and it has shown that ongoing erosion in the St. Clair River is resulting in an 845 million gallon per day diversion. It has lowered Michigan-Huron levels since 1970 by approximately 33 centimetres. And over that same period of time, Chicago diversion has lowered Michigan-Huron by 6.4 centimetres.

So it's a significant diversion, and we are pleased that the IJC has acknowledged this and has announced a plan to look at the Baird findings and hopefully come up with remediation. Thank you.

HERB GRAY: I shouldn't be pleading for a cause or a cause, they say in the church, but if you want to express your views to your federal elected

representatives, if any of you are Americans, on both sides of the border, that the funding for our upper lakes study be forthcoming, I'm sure that the IJC and its professional staff won't disagree.

And I want to say, too, that we have learned a lot from the major $30 million study over five years we're just completing, and we feel we can carry out the upper lakes study as a result for half the amount that the governments gave us for the lower lakes study. There will be a lot of synergies and a lot of things to be done there.

So just a little point of fact that may help you in your discussions with others on this. Now we have ten minutes. Does anybody else want to make a comment that…especially people who haven't spoken before. Yes, come forward, please.

AL TAYLOR: My name is Al Taylor. I'm the president of (inaudible)…Beach Association, but I'm also a fisherman.

And the fishing, recreational fishing has deteriorated badly. The fish that I have caught over the last three years are starving. And if you catch a salmon, you know that they are very round, but a pike has a slack body. The salmon have big heads and there's no food in their stomachs. Because I clean these fish, there's not much meat on them.

So obviously, something is going on, and I don't think it's cyclical. I have a sonar, and I don't mark as many fish when I go out fishing, either. So

something's happening, whether it's zebra mussels, spiny water (inaudible)…invasive species, I really don't know.

But if the recreational fishing disappears, that's an indication of the health of Georgian Bay. So that would be a comment I would make.

HERB GRAY: Thank you for your comment. And I want to make clear, when I spoke of cyclical events, I was talking about water levels, not the disappearance of species. I personally, as a layman, wouldn't think that that would be cyclical. There is something else going on here, as the speaker has mentioned. Okay, we've got eight minutes.

STEPHEN KEAT: I think there's one back there. Sir, please come forward.

HERB GRAY: Come forward, please.

PETER ENROSS (Sans Souci and Copperhead Association): Hello, I'm Peter Enross and I represent the Sans Souci and Copperhead Association on central Georgian Bay.

And I'd like to first of all say thank you, Chairman Gray, for allowing me to speak, but also to praise the efforts and the ongoing involvement of the GBA on such issues as water quality, water levels, and many other environmental causes that we're all concerned about.

As a member of the board of Sans Souci and Copperhead Association, there's a few things that, as an environmental committee member, we are concerned about and would like to have the IJC address.

Linking the information throughout all of Georgian Bay and the watersheds, I think is imperative, because biodiversity is linked. Obviously, when you're dealing with an ecological system, all of the systems are linked together.

So things like water testing, water quality testing throughout Georgian Bay should be linked into some kind of central database that all groups involved in the watershed management can access, and if they could possibly urge government to organize or help organize some system to share such a connection.

Also, dealing with the lower water levels and destroying wetlands, but also wetlands and wetland integrity. Not just water levels, but by destroying wetland integrity, we're also destroying the ability of wetlands as sinks to be able to hold any of the effluent material and also any of the pollution, including potential algae blooms, but also phosphate levels.

So by destroying our wetlands, we're also destroying the ability of our wetlands to maintain water quality in our system.

SSCA or Sans Souci and Copperhead Association has asked to preserve the Great Lakes water quality in areas such as Georgian Bay that have not been badly polluted, to preserve our wetlands as they are so important to the health of our water, and not focusing unduly on areas that are so badly polluted that repairing them would draw heavily on available resources and which will make impossible our efforts to save the areas that are still pristine.

And that's all I'd like to say. Thank you.

HERB GRAY: Thank you for your comments. I think we've reached the time to adjourn. Before I do that, I would like to call on the gentleman to my right to (inaudible)…words of greeting. I would say that he has recently joined our Washington office as a senior advisor.

And as you know, the International Joint Commission of Canada and the United States is one body even though it has two sections for administrative purposes, one in Ottawa, one in Washington, and it's an international organization based on a treaty.

It's not an agency of either government. This is why it can speak out freely and effectively on any issue involving the boundary waters. So before we adjourn, I'd like to introduce you to a new member of the staff in Washington.

STEPHEN KEAT: Thank you very much. Chair Schornack should have been the person speaking to you tonight, so I am speaking on his behalf. I'm a worker bee, okay, I'm not of the same rank as a chair, but I have taken great pleasure in listening to all of your comments tonight.

I have learned a lot from them, both from those who gave us some fairly elaborate presentations and from people who gave presentations that in many cases just came from your heart.

I think it's important for you all to understand that I have been taking notes and we have been taping all of this. So what our role is, as Chair Gray has said, is we're going to be transmitting your comments and the comments of other people in Canada and the United States at the various meetings that we're having, the

comments that people send to us by e-mail, and we're going to be having an interactive Web dialogue, which, by the way, I'd like to invite you all to participate in, so all of this is going to go into our report to the governments.

And I'm very impressed that you all took the time to come here tonight. I understand there's a hockey game on, so I'm even more impressed. (LAUGHS) So again, thank you very much, it's been a great pleasure to listen to you tonight.

HERB GRAY: I want to conclude by pointing out that it's the two governments, pursuant to Clause 7 of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, that will be carrying out the review, but they say they want to be in-depth and transparent, and their plan of review will be available in December.

And also, I'd like to say that I will recommend to my colleagues that when we prepare our set of recommendations to the IJC, we pay special attention to comments made at the public meetings like this one.

So thank you for coming, and let's keep working together on these issues vital not just to Georgian Bay, not just to Canada and the United States, but ultimately to the world. Thank you very much. (APPLAUSE)

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