



**International Joint Commission
United States and Canada**

June 12, 2003

Dr. Robert Hirsch
Accredited Officer for the United States
Associate Director for Water, U.S. Geological Survey
12201 Sunrise Valley Drive
Reston, VA 22092

*International Joint Commission

ACTION:
INFORMATION:
FILE: 9-3
1921 Order of approval for
St. Mary/Milk Rivers*

Dear Dr. Hirsch:

The International Joint Commission has received the attached letter from Governor Martz of the State of Montana asking it to review its 1921 Order for the St. Mary and Milk Rivers in Montana, Alberta, and Saskatchewan. This Order specifies procedures for implementing Article VI of the Boundary Waters Treaty to apportion the flows of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers between the two countries. Apportionment is carried out, per the Treaty, "jointly by the properly constituted reclamation officers of the United States and the properly constituted irrigation officers of His Majesty [Accredited Officers] under the direction of the International Joint Commission."

As you may know, the Commission has committed to reviewing Orders over which it has continuing jurisdiction. It has already conducted such reviews in the St. Croix River and Rainy Lake basins, is currently conducting reviews in the Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River basin and for Duck Lake, and is planning to conduct a review for the Upper Great Lakes, pending funding. These reviews have allowed the Commission to consider such things as changed conditions and new interests, scientific and technical advances since the Order, and potential climate change and variability. Small reviews have been conducted with Commission-supplied funding and focused agency support, while larger reviews have required funding supplied jointly by the two governments and broader agency support. Of the two completed reviews, one resulted in a change to the Commission's Orders, while the other did not.

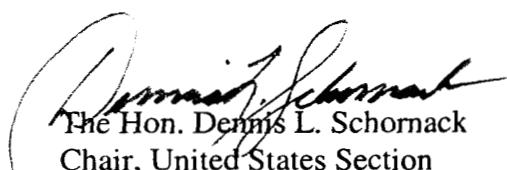
The Commission is exploring whether or not to conduct a review of its 1921 Order, as requested. As part of that process, we plan to be in contact with key officials in both countries. We intend, through these initial contacts, to gain a more fulsome understanding of issues and concerns, as well as likely resource requirements should the Commission decide to undertake a review. We will keep you informed of our progress and findings.

Similar letters are being sent to the U.S. Secretary of State, the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Governor of Montana, the Premiers of Alberta and Saskatchewan, and the Canadian Accredited Officer. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to have your staff contact us.

Sincerely,



The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray, P.C., Q.C.
Chair, Canadian Section



The Hon. Dennis L. Schornack
Chair, United States Section

cc: Mr. William J. Carswell, Jr., Alternate Accredited Officer for the United States
Mr. Robert Davis, Field Representative for the United States