



Alberta Irrigation PROJECTS ASSOCIATION

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28 August 2003

The Right Honourable Herb Gray
Chairman, Canadian Section
International Joint Commission
22nd Floor, 234 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON
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Mr. Dennis L. Shormack
Chairman, United States Section
International Joint Commission
1250 23rd Street N.W.
Washington, DC
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Dear Sirs:

RE: IJC Interest in the Apportionment of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers, Alberta, Canada

I read with interest the recent articles in the Lethbridge Herald about initiatives being considered by the International Joint Commission regarding the Milk River and the St. Mary River [Cross border waterways to be examined, 30 July, 2003 and Communities along Milk River deserve constant and reliable source of water, 02 August 2003]. The Alberta Irrigation Projects Association [AIPA], incorporated in 1946, represents the interests of organized irrigation in Alberta, encompassing more than 1.3 million acres of annual irrigated crop production.

Irrigation in Alberta is vital to primary agricultural producers, a thriving agricultural value-added industry, rural residents, communities [most of whom obtain their municipal water supplies through the irrigation infrastructure network], recreation and the environment. Investments by the Irrigation Districts from the financial resources of their producers, combined with cost-shared programs of the Government of Alberta, have moved irrigation to the forefront of sustainable water resource management.

In September 2002, the AIPA, in conjunction with many partners, released a major report on the status of water management and irrigation, "Irrigation in the 21st Century". The report focusses on the use of water in the South Saskatchewan River Basin and the southern tributaries [the St. Mary River, Belly River and Waterton River]. It highlights the advances that have been and continue to be made in water management. The report also deals with the scale of important economic impacts associated with the irrigation infrastructure.

The long-standing Boundary Waters Treaty has been very important in achieving the stability that has evolved in irrigated agriculture and in the support that water delivered through the irrigation network provides. While the AIPA is unaware of the details and/or Terms of Reference of any proposed or possible review of the interpretation of the Boundary Waters Treaty, our association expresses a keen interest in the initiative - and thereby hopes to ensure that the International Joint Commission is fully aware of the vital nature of the water supplies managed under the Treaty.

Because every drop counts...

The Right Honourable Herb Gray

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RE: IJC Interest in the Apportionment of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers, Alberta, Canada

This office would be pleased to be made aware of the status of any discussions and to know how we might best participate in providing important factual information should a review of the Treaty and/or its management or interpretation be conducted by the IJC.

For your information, I have included with this correspondence, a complete set of reports published as part of the Irrigation in the 21st Century Project. Please do not hesitate to contact our office should you have any questions in this regard.

Yours truly;



David Hill
Executive Director

enclosures Volumes 1 through 5, Irrigation in the 21st Century

SOUTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER BASIN

IRRIGATION

in the 21st Century

Volume 1:
Summary Report

