

TO: International Joint Commission

FROM: Marko Manoukian
PO Box 430
Malta, MT 59538

Dear International Joint Commission:

I appreciate the opportunity to write to the International Joint Commission regarding the apportionment of the St. Mary and Milk Rivers. As a member of the St. Mary Rehabilitation Working Group, I have become aware of the importance of these two rivers serving both Canada and the United States.

As a resident of Malta, Montana the irrigation water supplied by St. Mary to the Milk River provides over \$6 million dollars in gross revenues to our local community annually. This gross revenue can have an annual economic multiplier affect of over \$10 million dollars. This does not include the value of the local beef cattle operations that depend on irrigated crops for winter forage.

With reference to the water apportionment concern, I fully support the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. However, I believe the IJC should review the 1921 Order that directs how the measurement and apportionment of these waters were to be made. The purpose of the Order was to apportion the waters of the St. Mary and Milk River equally between Canada and the United States. The IJC's own data indicates that, specifically during dry years, Montana receives considerably less than its fair share of the water (as much as 10% less). During these drought years, the Malta Irrigation District has had to idle irrigated acres due to this shortage, costing irrigators several million dollars in crop loss.

I strongly encourage the IJC to review the 1921 Order. If the Order was reviewed and Montana was provided its fair share of the St. Mary and Milk River water, it would greatly reduce drought stress and potentially increase our economic return on the same irrigated acres on normal years.

I thank the IJC for allowing me the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

 7-27-04

Marko Manoukian
Malta, Montana Resident
St. Mary Rehabilitation Working Group Member