

Media Advisory Water Levels Study Releases Candidate Plans

For Immediate Release

Buffalo, NY – The International Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Study Board will present its current candidate plans for the regulation of water levels and outflows from Lake Ontario through the St. Lawrence River on Wednesday, July 13, at the Sackets Harbor Central School located at 215 South Broad Street in Sackets Harbor, NY, and again on Thursday, July 14, at the Captain's Steak & Seafood Restaurant located at 27 East First Street in Oswego, NY. There will be an open house prior to the meetings beginning at 6:30 p.m. The presentation will start at 7 p.m. followed by a question and answer session.

Before the International Lake Ontario - St. Lawrence River Study Board writes its final report and provides its recommendations to the International Joint Commission (IJC) to make changes to the regulation of outflows from Lake Ontario through the St. Lawrence River, the Study would like to hear from the public.

The Study investigated the impacts of water level regulation on environmental factors, recreational boating and tourism, coastal erosion and flooding, commercial navigation, water uses, and power generation. They also took into account the forecasted effects of climate change. "Over 150 experts from the U.S. and Canada agree that it is very difficult to please all interests all of the time," stated Dr. Daniel J. Barletta, U.S. Lead of the Study's Public Interest Advisory Group. "We have considered all interests equally while consulting widely with the public."

Although many potential plans were developed, the Study Board used their decision-making guidelines to evaluate the benefits to different interests for each plan and narrowed their recommendations down to the three candidate plans that are being brought before the public. "The Study Board will not be advocating a single, best-alternative plan, since the IJC specifically requested a set of viable candidate plans that were most responsive to the interests of the shoreline communities and the economic and environmental sustainability of the region," stated Dr. Eugene Z. Stakhiv, U.S. Study Director. The candidate plans, known as Plan A, the balanced economic plan; Plan B, the balanced environmental plan; and Plan D, the blended benefits plan all provide some overall economic and environmental benefits over the plan currently being used, 1958D with deviations.

Plan A, the balanced economic plan, performs the best overall for recreational boaters and for commercial navigation on the St. Lawrence Seaway, but it has losses for shoreline interests on Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Plan B, the balanced environmental plan, does the best overall for the environment and for hydropower interests, but also has losses to shoreline interests with some significant flooding potential around Montreal. Plan D, the blended benefits plan, tends to have more balanced performance and is the only plan that has no overall losses for shoreline interests. Of the three plans, Plan D provides the least additional benefit to the environment, showing little change from 1958D with deviations.

Detailed fact sheets regarding the plans are available on the Study website at www.losl.org. Written comments from the public regarding the plans must be received before August 5, 2005.

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The Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Study was set in motion in 2000 by the International Joint Commission to evaluate the Commission's Order of Approval used to regulate outflows from Lake Ontario through the St. Lawrence River. The Study is assessing the impacts of changing water levels on affected interests, including shoreline communities, municipal and industrial water uses, commercial navigation, hydropower, the environment, and recreational boating, also taking into account the forecasted effects of climate change. Recommendations for possible new regulation plans and criteria will be provided to the IJC in the Study's final report later this year.