

INTERNATIONAL RED RIVER BOARD

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CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DE LA RIVIERE ROUGE

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IJC Commissioners

The International Red River Board passed a motion during its September 2019 meeting to recommend nutrient concentration objectives and nutrient load targets for the Red River at the boundary between the United States and Canada. The Board recommends that the International Joint Commission support the recommended nutrient objectives and targets and forward the request to the governments of Canada and the United States for approval. Further, the Board recommends that the Commission add the proposed nutrient objectives and targets to the list of water quality objectives for the Red River at the international boundary between the U.S. and Canada.

Background:

For over a half century, in advising governments in accordance with the Article IX Reference function under the Boundary Waters Treaty (BWT), the International Joint Commission (IJC) has recommended the adoption and use of Water Quality Objectives for boundary and transboundary waters between the U.S. and Canada. In 1969, the U.S. and Canadian governments authorized the International Joint Commission to establish continuous supervision over the quality of waters in the Red River crossing the boundary and to recommend amendments or additions to the objectives when considered warranted by the Commission. On April 11, 1968, the Commission recommended the establishment of Water Quality Objectives for five variables (dissolved oxygen, total dissolved solids, chloride, sulfate, and fecal coliforms) at the international boundary, that recommendation was approved by governments on May 4, 1969. Consistent with the Board's mandate, we continue to monitor and report on compliance with these five water quality objectives where the Red River crosses the boundary between the U.S. and Canada.

In the 2000s, the International Red River Board identified nutrients as an issue of concern. In September 2011, the Board accepted a proposal from Board members representing Minnesota, North Dakota and Manitoba which included the development of nutrient load allocations and/or water quality targets for nutrients in the Red River at the U.S./Canada boundary. Subsequently, the Board established a Water Quality Committee to develop recommendations for potential nutrient load allocations and/or targets. The Water Quality Committee includes active membership from the following organizations:

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
Manitoba Sustainable Development
North Dakota State Department of Environmental Quality
U.S. Geological Survey
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Environment and Climate Change Canada
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Red River Basin Commission

With support from studies carried out through the Commission's International Watersheds Initiative, the Water Quality Committee developed recommendations for nutrient concentration objectives and nutrient load targets for the Red River at the border between the U.S. and Canada (Table 1). The Board

recommends the Commission add nutrient concentration objectives and nutrient load targets to the list of water quality objectives established by governments for the Red River where it crosses the boundary between the U.S. and Canada. This recommendation is consistent with the Commission's mandate to "to establish continuous supervision over the quality of the waters crossing the boundary in the Red River and to recommend amendments or additions to the objectives when considered warranted by the International Joint Commission" and the Board's mandate related to water quality in the Red River to "recommend appropriate strategies to the Commission concerning water quality, quantity and aquatic ecosystem health objectives in the basin." A report summarizing the derivation of the nutrient concentration objectives and nutrient load targets accompanies this letter for Commission review.

Table 1. Recommended nutrient concentration objectives and nutrient loads for the Red River where it crosses the boundary between the U.S. and Canada

	Total Phosphorus	Total Nitrogen	Application
Nutrient concentration objective	0.15 mg/L	1.15 mg/L	Seasonal average (April 1 st – October 30 th)
Nutrient load target	1,400 tonnes/year	9,525 tonnes/year	Five year running average

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mike Renouf
Co-Chairs, Canadian Section



Col. Karl Jansen
Co-Chairs, US Section

cc. Jim Ziegler and Nicole Armstrong, Co-Chairs, Water Quality Committee
IJC Advisors (Mark Gabriel and Robert Phillips)