

The Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, P.C., M.P.
Secretary of State for External Affairs
Canada



Le très hon. Joe Clark, C. P., député
Secrétaire d'Etat aux Affaires extérieures

OTTAWA, ONTARIO
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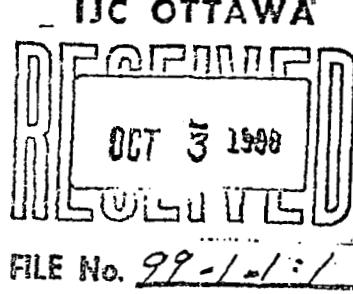
Dear Mr. Koop:

I am writing to you regarding issues of air quality in the Windsor-Detroit area. As you know, the Government of Canada has expressed its concerns on a number of occasions over the potential consequences for Canadians of emissions of toxic chemicals from the Detroit municipal solid waste incinerator currently under construction. In recent months we have also learned of several other proposals for facilities in the Detroit area, (for example, St. Mary's Peerless Cement) to burn hazardous chemicals in their production processes, or for commercial waste destruction.

We have pursued our concerns over the potential effects on the health and environment of Canadians in the Windsor area from such sources on a case-by-case basis. We believe however that there is a larger question involved. We are concerned at the potential, cumulative effects of emissions of toxic and hazardous substances from incineration facilities, large or small, in the Windsor-Detroit area on air quality on both sides of the international border. The International Joint Commission has had a long and successful history of monitoring and reporting upon air quality in the Windsor-Detroit area. I believe it would be most helpful if the Commission could again play a role in this regard.

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Mr. Rudy Koop
Acting Secretary
Canadian Section
International Joint Commission
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I understand that further to the IJC's Final Report Pursuant to the July 8, 1975 Reference on the State of Air Quality in the Detroit-Windsor and Port Huron-Sarnia Areas, in 1983, the Commission disbanded the International Michigan-Ontario Air Pollution Board, but that the International Air Pollution Advisory Board (now called the International Air Quality Advisory Board) was continued. While the latter has reported on the Detroit incinerator, for example, it seems to have such a broad range of activities that it would not be able to give detailed attention to a regional problem. The former performed a very useful function, and many of the questions posed in the July 1975 reference which led to its creation are still relevant to the current situation.

I would ask, therefore that the IJC re-commence its work pursuant to the July 1975 reference. In particular, I would wish to see the Commission examine and report upon the actual and potential hazards posed to human health and the environment from airborne emissions in the Windsor-Detroit area. The Government of the United States supports this proposal; I understand that a letter will shortly go forward to the US Section of the IJC on it.

It is, of course, the prerogative of the IJC to establish an appropriate mechanism to carry out this task. I would however ask the Commission to take into account the resource constraints currently facing Governments. Indeed, the Commission may wish to consider a structure similar to the board which carried out the work of the 1975 reference, which proved to be quite effective.

I look forward to the IJC's further contributions to our knowledge of this problem, which will help governments deal more effectively with them.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Clark".