

The Embassy of Canada presents its compliments to the Department of State and refers to the Embassy's Note No. 141 of April 15, 1980 and the Department of State's reply of May 21, 1980, concerning water quality problems in the Niagara River and their consequences for the health and property of Canadians.

The Embassy is pleased to transmit a summary of the Environmental Baseline Report on the Niagara River prepared by Environment Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Environment for the Canada-Ontario Review Board on Water Quality and will forward the Report next week. This Report summarizes Canadian data on water quality (suspended sediment), bottom sediment and biota collected in the Niagara River between 1975 and 1979. The Report states that concentrations of total DDT, PCB's, aldrin/dieldrin, endosulfan (thiodan), lindane and cadmium exceeded the specific objectives of the Canada-U.S. Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement at certain stations in the lower Niagara River on at least one occasion during 1979. In addition, other synthetic chemicals, for which no specific water quality objectives have been developed, were also detected.

As many of the chemicals detected are frequently found in association with incompletely treated wastes from industries operating in the vicinity of the Niagara River, these data give rise to additional and specific concerns on top of those which were indicated in the Embassy's Note of April 15, 1980.

In particular, the Government of Canada is concerned that serious operational problems are still being experienced at the Niagara Falls (N.Y.) Waste Water Treatment Plant and that agreement does not appear to have been reached between EPA and Niagara Falls officials to proceed with rehabilitation of this plant. The Embassy wishes to reiterate the Government's concerns that there may exist a continuing risk to the health and property of Canadians and seeks assurances that urgent steps will be taken to resolve any administrative difficulties which might further delay the rehabilitation of the Niagara Falls Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Secondly, while U.S. agencies have provided general information regarding the operations of SCA Chemical Waste Services, Inc., and their possible impact on the water quality of the Niagara River, recent disclosures reported in the Canadian press relating to past actions at the site give rise to further concerns. The Canadian authorities wish to request further information on this matter.