



news release

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GREAT LAKES WATER QUALITY AGREEMENT REVIEW

The Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, and the Honourable Tom McMillan, Minister of the Environment, are pleased to make the following announcement:

"The International Joint Commission has presented its Third Biennial Report on the 1978 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement to the Governments of Canada and the United States. Under the terms of the Agreement, Canada and the United States, as signatories, are now required to review its operation and effectiveness.

The Government of Canada is committed to the goals of the Agreement, the principal bilateral instrument through which Canada and the United States endeavour to resolve pollution problems in the Great Lakes. We recognize, however, that much remains to be done to achieve these goals; we thus welcome the IJC's comprehensive and thought-provoking recommendations on the subject.

We note with particular interest the report's focus on toxic chemical pollution. On February 4, 1987, a significant step was taken to deal with this problem with the signing of the Declaration of Intent on the Niagara River by the Canadian government, the U.S. federal government, the Government of Ontario and the Government of New York State. That document, which accompanies and strengthens the Niagara Toxics Management Plan, calls for a targetted reduction of 50% in loadings from both sides of the Niagara River of persistent toxic chemicals of concern by 1996. Efforts are currently underway to develop a similar plan for Lake Ontario.

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The actual review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement will entail an internal assessment of the International Joint Commission's recommendations as well as bilateral discussions with the United States on our respective performances under the terms of the Agreement. Consultations will begin among interested departments of the federal government. Consultations will also be conducted with provincial authorities and the public, and in due course with the Government of the United States.

The Government of Canada is sensitive to the concerns of all Canadians affected by the pollution of the Great Lakes. It is our intention to carry out the review taking into account the views of interested individuals and groups, in particular those expressed in the 1985 report of the Royal Society of Canada/U.S. National Research Council of the U.S. and the 1987 report of Great Lakes United. We plan, as well, to issue an interim response to the IJC once we have had an opportunity to examine in detail the Third Biennial Report."