



International Joint Commission

MEDIA RELEASE

For Release: February 10, 1999 at 2:00 p.m.

IJC to investigate water use, diversion and removal policies

The United States and Canadian federal governments today asked the International Joint Commission (IJC) to examine and report on the use, diversion and removal of waters along the common border. The governments noted that "boundary water resources continue to be the subject of ever-increasing demands in the light of expanding populations" and that "proposals to use, divert and remove greater amounts of such waters can be expected."

The request from governments comes in the wake of proposals to export water overseas from Canada and litigation involving the export of water from Canada to the United States. Both governments are concerned that existing management principles and conservation measures may be inadequate to ensure future sustainable use of shared waters.

The need to review the management and use of transboundary water resources was raised by the IJC in a 1997 report entitled *The IJC and the 21st Century*. The IJC said such a review is needed to ensure that water and related resources are managed in a rational, consistent and anticipatory way to prevent transboundary disputes.

"The importance of binational cooperation in addressing these critical issues cannot be overstated," said Leonard Legault, Chairman of the IJC's Canadian Section in response to today's request from the two governments.

"In conducting this investigation, the IJC will consult with federal, provincial and state governments, international and regional organizations, and other relevant sources inside and outside of government," said Thomas Baldini, chair of the IJC's U.S. Section.

The request from the governments asks the IJC to examine, report upon and provide recommendations on the following matters which may have effects on levels and flows of water within transboundary basins and shared aquifers:

1. Existing and potential consumptive uses of water;
2. Existing and potential diversions of water in and out of the transboundary basins, including withdrawals of water for export;
3. The cumulative effects of existing and potential diversions and removals of water, including removals in bulk for export;

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