

**A Brief History of the Canadian Environmental Law Association
Involvement in the 1985 Great Lakes Charter Implementation and
the Annex Agreements to the Charter 2005**

CELA has been involved in Great Lakes' water sustainability issues since 1985 when the Great Lakes Charter was drafted. CELA has opposed all subsequent bulk water diversions proposed for the Great Lakes since then. In 1977, in partnership with Great Lakes United, we published *The Fate of the Great Lakes: Sustaining or Draining the Sweetwater Seas?*. This report chronicled the failures of the Charter and identified stresses expected to impact the Great Lakes. These included pressures for bulk water export outside the Basin as well as growing demands from areas within and near to the basin for waters for growth and development or to replace polluted sources of drinking water.

A year later, the Ministry of the Environment granted a water-taking permit to the NOVA Group to export bulk water by tanker from Lake Superior. CELA was granted standing in the Environmental Appeal hearing that was to follow to oppose that permit. Fortunately, the permit was withdrawn and an International Joint Commission reference followed that led to the negotiations between the US States, Ontario and Quebec to forge more binding agreements to prevent harmful withdrawals from the Great Lakes.

CELA worked throughout the five years of these negotiations with other ENGOs, on an Advisory Committee to the agreement negotiators, the Council of Great Lakes Governors and Premiers and on an advisory panel to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. Our work plan for the next year focuses on the successful implementation of the Annex Agreements in Ontario and the U.S. States.