

Date: October 18th, 2019

Attention: Shoreline Mayors, CAOs, and Community Emergency Management Coordinators

RE: Lake Ontario 2020 Flooding and Plan 2014

Time is running out – your municipality is going to flood again in 2020. *Can you say you did everything in your power to mitigate it?*

The flooding of 2017 and 2019 has been devastating to your shoreline communities. People lost their homes and property, declared bankruptcy, and now suffer from the severe mental health impacts that come with protracted trauma. Your shoreline businesses have been severely depleted, and many say they cannot survive another year of flooding. Your municipality spent enormous amounts of taxpayer dollars on emergency response and recovery. Your emergency responders were put in harm's way, as were your shoreline families. Your municipal infrastructure was severely damaged or imminently threatened. The environmental, economic, social and cultural costs to your shoreline communities has been immeasurable.

Today, Lake Ontario is 20 inches above the long-term average for this time of year. The International Joint Commission (IJC) is on record as being "extremely concerned" for next year's lake levels, as a third flood is now almost a guarantee in 2020. Learning nothing from the 2017 and 2019 floods, the IJC has **REDUCED** outflows nine times in the last nine weeks, choosing to adhere to Plan 2014's L-Limits + 200 m³/s. Continuing to adhere to Plan 2014's outflow regulation has put the worse-case flooding forecasts for 2020 **a full-foot higher than the levels reached in 2019**. We simply need a snowy winter and a wet spring, *like we had in 2017 and 2019*, and the impact will be catastrophic.

Municipal CAO's: Have you considered what this will do to your municipal budget, your municipal staff, your municipal infrastructure? Have you considered what this will do to your shoreline tax-base?

Emergency Management Coordinators: Will an extra foot have you evacuating whole communities, including those residing on the in-land tributaries of Lake Ontario? Will your evacuation routes be fully compromised? Will you be declaring a State of Emergency, left begging for resources alongside dozens of other municipalities all facing the same crisis? Have you considered the likelihood that your firefighters, NGO's and volunteers could be facing 10-foot+ swells trying to save life and property? Are they trained and equipped? Will you lose lives in the floods of 2020?

Mayors, Chairs and Reeves: How will you manage the after-effects? When dozens, if not hundreds of families in your community are displaced violently? When your families are left financially destitute and emotionally broken? When your businesses are left bankrupt and your shoreline culture eradicated? When your shoreline environment and ecosystems are destroyed? When public health is threatened by septic and water-borne bacteria? When you are tasked with finding dollars in your budget to recover, as provincial and federal dollars are insufficient to help you rebuild?

United Shoreline: Ontario

United in One Voice

In media, we hear the same three reasons presented as causes of Lake Ontario's high water:

- 1) Climate change
- 2) Record inflows through Lake Erie and rain/snow
- 3) Plan 2014's "higher-high" policies and the IJC's continued refusal to release the greatest outflows possible, favouring the protection of Shipping over the protection of Shoreline.

Now consider this - of these three potential causes, *which one can human beings influence immediately to try to prevent a third round of flooding in 2020?* The answer is simple.

Over the last several weeks, you have all been asked to use your positional power to pressure the IJC and demand higher outflows **before the end of this year**. Mayors, you have been asked to join ranks in a single position to publicly demand dramatic increases to outflow and a review/repeal of Plan 2014, led by Quinte West Mayor Jim Harrison. CAOs and CEMCs, you have also been asked to join ranks to use your positional power in the same way. **Have you?**

If you have, then you will be able to demonstrate to your shoreline families, communities, businesses and emergency responders that you did everything in your power to represent them and minimize the risk of devastating flooding in 2020.

If you have not, then consider what the impact of that choice will be. **Inaction is a choice**. Please find [here](#) the lawsuit filed by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation against the IJC: *Negligence, Private Nuisance, and Trespass*, because the IJC **failed to act**.

You have only a small window for action. The excess water must be released before the end of December 2019. The IJC must be made to provide all possible relief to the domestic use of the shoreline, as outlined in [Article VIII of the 1909 Boundary Treaty](#).

United Shoreline Ontario is urging you to act now by contacting Hannah Brown of the Office of the CAO, Quinte West, at Hannah.brown@quintewest.ca. Quinte West Mayor Jim Harrison has committed the time and resources to unify the Mayors, the CAOs and the Emergency Services, but they CANNOT DO IT WITHOUT YOU.

If you would like to learn more about Plan 2014, you can find an 8 part e-learning series at [United Shoreline Ontario](#).

Thanking you in advance for your immediate action and support,



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