



Save The River®

Upper St. Lawrence RIVERKEEPER®

*Protecting the St. Lawrence River through Advocacy, Education and Research since 1978
...now and for generations to come.*

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
John Peach

409 Riverside Drive
Clayton, New York 13624
(315) 686-2010
email: info@savetheriver.org
www.savetheriver.org

Dear Editor,

March 2, 2020

There were two significant developments last week in Save The River's advocacy efforts to achieve a delay to the opening of the 2020 shipping season. The Seaway agreed to delay the opening from March 20 until April 1, and we applaud their decision. This will allow the International Lake Ontario St. Lawrence River Board (ILOSLRB) to use those additional days to let out the maximum amount of water from the system, bringing some relief to riparians and shoreline businesses along the Upper St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario.

The second development was a memo issued by the IJC on Feb 27, stating "If, at the end of March, Lake Ontario water levels and inflows to the lake indicate the need for extraordinary action, and if conditions in the St. Lawrence River provide an opportunity for increased outflows, the IJC has directed the Board (*ILOSLRB*) to maximize outflows from Lake Ontario over the period April 1 to April 15. Under such conditions, all interested parties would be provided with advance notice of any outflow increases that might create unsafe conditions for commercial navigation..."

Save The River has been urging the ILOSLRB to keep the outflow rates as high as possible until the beginning of the annual Ottawa River freshet - which usually starts around April 15. Once the freshet begins, the slowdown of the outflow through the Moses-Saunders dam may be necessary in order to not exacerbate the flooding of Montreal harbor and further down river. The IJC's memo puts the shipping industry on notice that there may be a further delay of 15 days to continue to lower the water levels.

We live on a shared waterway, and all stakeholders need to share in the burdens that are the results of a decade of record high precipitation throughout the Great Lakes Basin. From everything we read and hear, Save the River believes we are headed for another high water year. We will continue to advocate for the extended delay of the Seaway opening until April 15 as part of our mission to preserve and protect the Upper St. Lawrence River now and for generations to come through advocacy, education, and research.

Sincerely,

John Peach
Executive Director, Save The River
Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper

*Save The River envisions a healthy Upper St. Lawrence River that provides safe drinking water,
is home to a thriving range of indigenous species and supports sustainable economic activity.*