



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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October 23, 2019

Craig Middlebrook, Deputy Administrator

Policy Headquarters

U.S. Department of Transportation

1200 New Jersey Ave, SE

Washington, DC 20590

Terence Bowles, President and CEO

Great Lakes Seaway Management Corporation, Head Office

202 Pitt Street

Cornwall, Ontario

Canada K6J 3P7

Dear Administrator Middlebrook and President Bowles,

As we get further into the fall season of this extremely high water year caused by record precipitation throughout the Great Lakes and Ottawa River basins, many of our members, St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario riparians, and business owners remain very concerned about the prospect of another year of flooding and shoreline damage. It appears that the only proactive maneuver within your power against such a future event is to allow for ramp up of the outflows through the Moses-Saunders Dam to the maximum design limits.

We are aware that to increase the outflow to the maximum through the next two months causes safety concerns for the shipping industry. However, after twice refusing to consider a program of patterning of shipping (proposed in our July 22, and October 1, 2019 letters) we are left with no alternative except to call on you for an early closure of this shipping season. Closing the shipping season on December 1 would create the opportunity for the ILOSLRB to increase outflows to the maximum and decrease the water level before having to temporarily reduce the flow to form a proper sheet of ice.

We understand that a call for the early closure of shipping may cause scheduling and logistics challenges for the shipping industry, and perhaps some supply chain disruption in Great Lakes ports. However, making that decision now would allow for shippers to make plans to adjust their schedules while there is still time.

For over 40 years Save The River has been the leading grassroots advocacy organization working to protect the St. Lawrence River by campaigning to stop aquatic invasive species, fighting winter navigation, and promoting an environmentally friendly water levels plan. Save The River also organizes the water quality restoration and monitoring programs that track River health and identify pollution problems.

Many of our shoreline businesses such as marinas, restaurants, hotels, and fishing guides have suffered significant losses this season due to the effects of the extreme high water. It will be difficult for them to make up those losses. Another extreme high water year could force them out of business. We are asking the shipping industry for the third time to shoulder their share of the burdens caused by the water levels. During times of flooding, it is usual for all businesses and stakeholders to lend their support to help those most severely affected recover from their losses.

Having decided not to act upon our July and October suggestions of patterning, there is still time for shipping to do its part to help lower the historically high water levels back to nearer seasonal averages while the opportunity exists.

I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest possible convenience about what actions you will take to help resolve this situation.

Sincerely,



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

cc. IJC Commissioner Jane Corwin, U.S. Chair
IJC Commissioner Pierre Béland, Canadian Chair
Frank Bevacqua, IJC Public Information Officer
Governor Andrew Cuomo
Representative Elise Stefanik
Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Senator Patty Ritchie
Assemblyman Mark Walczyk

*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.*