



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.

September 14, 2020

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John Peach

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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 move into the fall of 2020 with Lake Ontario's level still several inches above long term average, Save The River Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper® and many of the shoreline businesses and riparians are concerned about the extreme high water levels of the other four Great Lakes. On behalf of our 1000 members and 15,000 followers, Save The River commends the efforts of the International Lake Ontario St. Lawrence River Board (ILOSRLB) and the cooperation of the Seaway during this shipping season in keeping the flows high in order to lower the water levels toward the long term average.

However, with the immense amount of water still upstream of Lake Ontario and flowing towards the St. Lawrence, Save The River believes that the Seaway should put shippers on notice that if high water levels warrant higher flows than are deemed safe for navigation, shippers should prepare flexibility in their scheduling for both closing and spring opening dates of the Seaway.

We understand that an early closure of shipping may cause scheduling and logistics challenges for the shipping industry, and perhaps some supply chain disruption in Great Lakes ports. Many of our shoreline businesses such as marinas, restaurants, hotels, and fishing guides suffered significant losses during the 2017 & 2019 seasons due to the effects of the extreme high water caused by years of record precipitation. Coupled with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic this year, 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 to continue to shoulder their share of the burdens caused by the extreme high 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.

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.

Building flexibility into shipping schedules at the end of this season and start of next season would allow ILOSLRB to keep flows at the higher levels required, if needed, to try to prevent another extreme high water year on Lake Ontario and the Upper St. Lawrence River.

Sincerely,



John Peach
Executive Director
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
Premier Ford
Representative Elise Stefanik
Senator Charles Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Senator Patty Ritchie
Assemblyman Mark Walczyk

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