



# STATE OF MINNESOTA

## Office of Governor Tim Walz

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155-1611

November 21, 2019

The Honorable Jane Corwin, Chair  
The Honorable Robert Sisson, Commissioner  
The Honorable Lance Yohe, Commissioner  
International Joint Commission, U.S. Section  
1717 H Street, NW S. 835  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Commissioners:

It has come to my attention that the International Joint Commission (IJC) is exploring additional measures to provide relief to shoreline landowners on Lake Ontario by increasing flows through the Moses-Saunders Power Dam on the St. Lawrence River. I am writing to urge the IJC to consider the disruption this would cause for Great Lakes ports, including those in Minnesota.

Since 1959, the Seaway has reliably served the commercial, industrial and agricultural heartland of both the United States (US) and Canada, home to roughly one quarter of the Canada/US combined population. The Seaway creates a foundation for a complex intermodal transportation network that reduces supply chain costs and moves our nations' products to global markets. Cargo shipments on the system support Minnesota's agricultural, manufacturing, power-generation and mining industries and associated direct, indirect and induced jobs.

In the world of freight, reliability and efficiency are key performance metrics. Shutting the Seaway prematurely will result in broken contracts and lost business that may not return. With approximately six weeks left in the 2019 shipping season, there is not sufficient time for businesses to adjust to broken contracts. Shippers will seek alternative supply routes and supply chains, potentially resulting in permanent traffic loss for the Seaway and causing further congestion to highways, railways, and coastal port cities.

While two weeks of increased flows through the Moses-Saunders Power Dam would provide some benefit to some property owners on Lake Ontario, it poses a significant threat to ports throughout the Great Lakes. Looking ahead to the 2020 season, we urge the IJC to conduct two assessments to better inform outflow rate decisions: a) a hydrologic assessment of the effect of outflow rates on Lake Ontario water levels; and b) an economic impact assessment on the effects of slowing and stopping shipping to our states', provinces', and nations' economies (jobs and wages, business revenue, tax generation).

While I recognize the damage that high water levels have caused to communities along the lower Great Lakes, I hope the IJC will carefully consider the widespread and potentially

long-term impacts that increasing flows through the Moses-Saunders Power Dam prior to the end of the 2019 shipping season would cause.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. J. Walz". The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

Tim Walz  
Governor

cc: Laura Lochman, Director, Office of Canadian Affairs  
Michael Kozak, Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs