

June 16th 2012

**The Honourable Jim Bradley, Minister of Environment
Queens Park Toronto**

Dear Minister Bradley,

On behalf of the Provincial Council of Women of Ontario (PCWO), which represents many thousands of Ontarians, through our 18 affiliated member groups across Ontario, may I congratulate you on your ministry's recently announced Great Lakes Protection Act, a visionary piece of legislation which seeks to help Ontarians work together with your government to protect and restore these precious lakes and their surrounding eco-systems.

As you may know, PCWO has kept a 'watching brief' on the Great Lakes for very many years, featuring Annual Meeting speakers such as John Jackson of Great Lakes United, attending International Joint Commission consultations, and commenting on International Joint Commission (IJC) proposals, such as the Great Lakes Annex Treaties and the very recent 'New Approach to Management of Water Flows (Bv7)'.

As we noted in our latest correspondence to the Commission, "Many millions of people rely on these waters for their physical, social, environmental and economic needs!" PCWO also referred to our long-held policy supporting the protection and health of wetlands and natural eco-systems, and expressed our pleasure that "the Bv 7 plan to change how water levels are managed will help restore more natural water levels and flows to the lake and river, revitalize wetlands and river habitats, and at the same time enhance the quality of life for those who live, work and play near, around and on the St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes."

While the Bv 7 plan has yet to be adopted, like your Great Lakes Protection Act, it is supported by numerous forward-thinking environmental groups. This is because in both cases the public has been consulted broadly and are eager to be involved in solutions that will, as Sierra Club's Mary Muter noted, after your announcement of the new Act, "restore degraded areas and protect what good habitat we have left in the Great Lakes." And, as John Jackson said, "Ontario's planned actions are a major step forward in putting us into a leadership role, which will encourage actions in other states and provinces through our own example. This is critical to address the major problems now threatening the health of the Great Lakes ecosystem."

PCWO joins these and other noted environmentalists in commending you, Minister Bradley, for your foresight to lead Ontario on a much needed, action-oriented, co-operative path towards renewed health of our treasured Great Lakes.

Sincerely,
Mary Potter, President PCWO

c.c. Premier Dalton McGuinty