

year, \$20 million study and proposing "Plan 2007", the IJC is proposing to maintain the status quo and change little from the current management plan. "Plan 2007" will not restore the natural cyclical rhythms of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River as was proposed in "Plan B+", the widely supported management proposal developed in the IJC Study that would provide significant environmental improvements to the region.

Audubon New York and the National Audubon Society applauds your attention to the need to restore the coastal ecosystems of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, and strongly supports your resolution calling for the adoption of a regulation that provides ecosystem benefits, and addresses the concerns of the public and the State of New York. We thank you for your strong efforts on this critical issue, and look forward to working with you and our partners throughout the region to ensure a sound environmental plan is implemented.

Sincerely,

ALBERT E. CACCесе,  
*Executive Director.*  
JOHN FLICKER,  
*President.*

DUCKS UNLIMITED,  
*Ann Arbor, MI, April 17, 2008.*

Congressman JOHN MCHUGH,  
*House of Representatives, Rayburn HOB, Wash-  
ington, DC.*

Congresswoman LOUISE SLAUGHTER,  
*House of Representatives, Rayburn HOB, Wash-  
ington, DC.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MCHUGH AND CONGRESSWOMAN SLAUGHTER: On behalf of the 16,000 Ducks Unlimited members in New York, I would like to thank you for your initiative on developing the resolution regarding the water level management plan for Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. As you know, DU has been engaged in this issue for many years, and strongly encouraged the International Joint Commission to adopt Plan B+ for future water level management of the Lake Ontario/St. Lawrence system. In our scientific opinion, Plan B+ delivered the best overall environmental, economic and social benefits to all affected interests.

In our opinion, Plan 2007 as presented by the IJC does not go far enough to remedy the past management regime, nor look forward enough to ensure multiple future benefits for the majority of affected people and resources. DU is mobilizing our membership to be present at the public information sessions and public hearings scheduled by the IJC so that our voice will be heard.

Therefore, Ducks Unlimited supports your bi-partisan House Resolution calling for the IJC to increase the level of environmental protections and benefits, fully consider the views of the public and State of New York when selecting the new plan, and maximize hydropower production (in line with Plan B+). Again, thank you for your leadership on this issue, and rest assured that Ducks Unlimited will be following this important environmental issue very closely.

Sincerely,

RAY WHITTEMORE,  
*Director of Conservation Programs.*

APRIL 22, 2008.

Hon. JOHN MCHUGH,  
*House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.*

Hon. LOUISE M. SLAUGHTER,  
*House of Representatives,  
Washington, DC.*

DEAR CONGRESSMAN MCHUGH AND CONGRESSWOMAN SLAUGHTER, We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to express our support for the house resolution you've developed that urges the International Joint

Commission to adopt a water management plan for the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario that takes into consideration environmental needs and the concerns of the public and affected States and urges the Secretary of State to reject any plan that does not do so.

Since the completion of the Moses-Saunders hydropower dam 50 years ago, the Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence River ecosystems have suffered consistent losses to their globally significant biodiversity due to unnatural and damaging water levels regulation. The current, 50 year-old regulation scheme has artificially constrained water levels, resulting in considerable damage to more than 50% of the region's coastal wetlands and significant impacts to many fish species and nesting water birds.

After more than five years of study funded by \$20-million taxpayer dollars, the IJC has the information necessary to select a scientifically-based and publicly supported management plan that would deliver significant environmental improvements to the region. Instead, the IJC has turned its back on the Lake and River environment by proposing a plan—Plan 2007—that continues, and perhaps even worsens, the environmental destruction of the Lake and River.

In a time of unprecedented momentum towards restoring the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system, the actions by the IJC that would reverse restoration programs are unacceptable.

We applaud your efforts to ensure that the environment of the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario are protected from further damage. By introducing and supporting this resolution, you are sending a strong signal to the International Joint Commission that the status quo, which has resulted in the significant losses of wetlands throughout the River and Lake ecosystem, is not acceptable.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Caddick, Executive Director, Save The River/Upper St. Lawrence Riverkeeper; Joel Brammeier, Vice President for Policy, Alliance for the Great Lakes; April H. Gromnicki, Esq., Director, Ecosystem Restoration, Audubon; Albert E. Caccese, Executive Director, Audubon New York; Julie M. Barrett O'Neill, Esq., Riverkeeper and Executive Director, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper; Dereth Glance, Executive Program Director, Citizens Campaign for the Environment; Gildo M. Tori, Director of Public Policy, Ducks Unlimited; Katherine Nadeau, Water & Natural Resources Program Associate, Environmental Advocates of New York; Jill Ryan, Executive Director, Freshwater Future; Mary Muter, Vice President, Environment, Georgian Baykeeper for Georgian Bay Association and Foundation; Thomas Marks, NY Director, Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council.

John Jackson, Director, Clean Production, Great Lakes United; Robert A. Sweeney, PhD, Executive Director, International Association for Great Lakes Research; Nancy Foster, Secretary, International Water Levels Coalition; Les Monostory, President, New York Division, Izaak Walton League; Robert M. Borchak, Director at Large, Michigan United Conservation Clubs; Karen M. Schapiro, Executive Director, Midwest Environmental Advocates; Andy Buchsbaum, Regional Executive Director, National Wildlife Federation; Harold L. Palmer, President, New York State Conservation Council; Aaron R. Vogel, Executive Director, Thousand Islands Land Trust; Bill Pielsticker, Legislative Chair, Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited.

TAXPAYER ASSISTANCE AND SIMPLIFICATION ACT (H.R. 5719)

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Taxpayer Assistance and Simplification Act (H.R. 5719). I want to thank Chairman RANGEL and Subcommittee Chairman LEWIS for bringing this legislation to the floor which modernizes IRS functions by responding to recommendations by the Taxpayer Advocate.

The Taxpayer Assistance and Simplification Act helps to simplify the tax process and protect taxpayers from abuses. It strengthens protection from identity theft and tax fraud by requiring the IRS to notify taxpayers if it suspects identity theft. H.R. 5719 also makes the tax process simpler by eliminating an outdated requirement for detailed records of calls made on employer-provided cell phones. It strengthens outreach to ensure that working families entitled to the Earned Income Tax Credit receive the refund they have earned and provides protections from predators.

H.R. 5719 helps to ensure tax fairness by closing an offshore loophole that allows government contractors, who receive millions or billions in taxpayers' dollars, to set up companies in foreign countries to avoid paying Social Security and Medicare taxes. For example, defense contractor KBR, has reportedly avoided paying over \$100 million in Social Security and Medicare taxes by creating shell companies in the Cayman Islands.

This important bill also puts an end to the use of private debt collection agencies to collect Federal income taxes and ensure that this critical government function is performed by public servants on behalf of American taxpayers. Despite aggressive tactics, contractors only brought in a little more than half of what it cost the IRS to implement the program. IRS agents can do this more efficiently and ending this program prevents the possible misuse of confidential taxpayer information. Our constituents deserve to know that the person contacting them on behalf of the Federal Government is a public-servant, who is held to the highest standards of accountability and confidentiality, not a person whose paycheck depends solely on the number of collections they make.

I urge my colleagues to support the Taxpayer Assistance and Simplification Act.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE GRAND OPENING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMUNITY-BASED OUTPATIENT CLINIC IN OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, it is a great honor for me to rise today to recognize the grand opening on April 25, 2008, of the Department of Veterans Affairs Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) in Okaloosa County, located in the First Congressional District in Northwest Florida.