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HOUSE TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION SECURITY
CHAIRMAN

Congress of the United States House of Representatives

January 17, 2017

The Honorable Mike Pence
Director of the Presidential Transition
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Vice President-elect Pence,

We are writing to highlight a very important issue within our districts in Upstate New York. As part of President Obama's legacy building effort, his Administration swiftly and suspiciously passed a plan to regulate Lake Ontario's water levels after it had been stagnant for years. This plan, known as Plan 2014, will cause millions of dollars in damage to properties, businesses, and communities along Lake Ontario's southern shoreline.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) is comprised of officials from both the United States and Canada. It was established in 1909 by the Boundary Waters Treaty and is tasked with providing unbiased advice to governments and conducting studies on issues among our shared waters. Under its jurisdiction, the IJC regulates the flow of water in and out of Lake Ontario.

The IJC, in conjunction with the U.S. State Department and the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), has been negotiating Plan 2014 for a number of years. Throughout this time, we have personally raised concerns with officials at all levels of government, in an attempt to draw attention to the threat facing businesses and homeowners in our districts. We were consistently told our concerns were being heard and that before moving forward with Plan 2014, there would be a true effort to mitigate the threat of severe flooding and damage that our shoreline property owners will face. Rather than provide the careful analyses and community consultation we were promised, the Obama Administration blindsided us in December by announcing that Plan 2014 would move forward in early 2017.

During a meeting, held on Capitol Hill, we requested an economic impact analysis from the State Department, CEQ, and the IJC. We were promised that report would be given to our offices within two weeks. More than two months after our request, we received a one-page document with none of the information we were seeking. We were never given information that would confirm or allay the worries of our constituents and no attempt was made to sell this plan to a skeptical public. The IJC itself acknowledges the millions of dollars in economic damage that this plan will cause.

The approval of this plan was a midnight action taken by an Administration more worried about burnishing the President's legacy than the negative impacts the plan would have on our constituents. We urge the transition team and the President-elect to review this action and to reverse the Obama Administration's ill-considered decision to move forward with Plan 2014. This plan should not move forward until a careful, detailed analysis has been conducted on the economic impact it would have, and any negative effects mitigated.

We stand ready to provide any information your office needs, and we appreciate your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



John M. Katko
Member of Congress



Chris Collins
Member of Congress