United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 6, 2007

International Joint Commission
U.S. Section
1250 23rd Street N.W., Suite 100
Washington, DC 20440

Dear Commissioners:

As you know, many of the Great Lakes are experiencing dramatic drops in water levels. According to recent reports in the *New York Times* and the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, experts expect Lake Superior's water level to reach a record low in the next two months, while water levels in Lake Michigan and Lake Huron have dropped three feet since 1999.

We recognize that a comprehensive approach to addressing this issue is necessary. The International Joint Commission, which has regulated Lake Superior outflows via the St. Marys Rivers since 1914, can play an important role is assessing the causes and solutions.

While we appreciate the initiation of the International Upper Great Lakes Study earlier this year, we request that this study be expedited – the study stalled out after first proposed in 2002, and is now expected to take another five years. We commend your leadership in expanding the study to also investigate the physical changes in the St. Clair River, which connects Lake Huron and Lake Erie, however this is no substitute for also updating your regulatory plan for Lake Superior, which has not been updated since 1979. The Great Lakes have undergone tremendous change in the last thirty years and many believe the low lake levels are not a short-term anomaly but a precursor of long-term impacts of global warming.

Also, public involvement is critical during your study process. The formation of the International Upper Great Lakes Study Public Interest Advisory Group is a good first step, but all interested parties need to be involved. We are concerned that many key stakeholders have not yet been notified of the International Joint Commission's study. Please use all tools to reach out to the Lakes' federal, state, tribal, and local governments; commercial, conservation, and recreational interests; and other interested parties.

Thank you for your consideration of our request and for your leadership on this important issue. The Great Lakes are a tremendous economic and natural resource that demands immediate attention and continuous commitment.

Sincerely,

Russell D. Feingold

Richard J. Durbin

Norm Coleman

Carl Levin

Debbie Stabenow

Amy Klobuchar

Herb Kohl