Submitted: Jacob D Wynn - March 27, 2026

Progress Report on the Parties 2025

Dear IJC Commissioners,

On behalf of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Environment Division, I am writing to provide comments on the latest Progress Report of the Parties. The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe is located on the terminal end of the Great Lake designation on the St. Lawrence River and is already confronted with jurisdictional issues stemming from the border that runs through the community. Additionally, a portion of the territory is within the context of the province of Quebec causing funding issues for local assessments and work.

In response to the prompts:

How have changes to water quality impacted the way you live, work, play and engage with the Great Lakes?

Bacterial Loading into tributaries causing excesses beyond human health thresholds limits recreational activities within great lake tributaries. Fish consumption advisories limit not only human consumption of fish but the safety of all creatures to be able to safely consume. The seaway not only has disrupted fish passage and migration but altered the hydrology on nearshore wetlands and contributes to erosion of shorelines. Concerns of upward trending water temperatures in all the Great Lakes and connecting tributaries (i.e. St. Lawrence River) and the consequences to water quality and fisheries health.

If you had a magic wand, what would you change to achieve progress on Great Lakes water quality?

More support to the farmers would improve run-off conditions that currently impact water quality. I would build an appropriate passage for migrating fish that would allow upstream and downstream access over the power dams for eel and salmon. I would remove all contamination from sediment and other sources and allow the environment to merely exist without the burden of industrial contamination. I would prevent water temperatures from rising.

Three years from now, how do you hope changes to Great Lakes water quality will have changed the way you live, work, and play in the Great Lakes?

There are no swim advisories, or they are greatly reduced due to effective land management and awareness of the land-use water quality paradigm. Additionally, sources of contamination are known and slated to be addressed. A commitment to fish passage and transparency on decision making from NYPA and OPG. Reasonable steps towards addressing water temperature increases including land-use, industry inputs, point non-point sources of temperature.

Those comments are in response to the prompts, more generally, the St. Lawrence River was lacking from the progress report with only two references to the Cornwall/Akwesasne AOC. I am not sure if this is because there was no reporting out on the work being done, or if the St. Lawrence is only considered part of the Great Lakes for the AOC purposes. While currently it is my understanding that the St. Lawrence River is a part of Lake Ontario, in reality, it is left out of the lake-wide studies. While, this is understandable from an

ecosystem perspective, the St. Lawrence is its own distinct ecosystem, it identifies an oversight in planning and an inequity in funding distribution. This issue is clearly illustrated in the maps of the State of the Great Lakes report, in the CSMI studies performed for Lake Ontario, and its near complete absence from this report. It is really good to read about all the work going on in the lakes, all the progress being made, novel approaches to understanding conditions. However, it would be even better if the St. Lawrence River was included in this work. For example, a number of Lake Ontario lake-wide studies could provide critical information for management and remediation, if they were performed in the St. Lawrence River as well. As the hydrologic outlet, and commercial entrance to the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River's importance cannot be overstated on its influence on the basin. Please consider this comment in future planning and consider how management can be adapted to better incorporate the needs of the river.

Nia:wen,
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