Submitted: Commissioner at Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago - March 16, 2026

I want to thank the International Joint Commission ...

I want to thank the International Joint Commission for always standing sentry for the Great Lakes. When I think back to my time coordinating 11 federal departments under the U.S. Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, it's even clearer in the rear view mirror that the federal government has an enormous amount of constraints on it that the IJC doesn't have. For example, much of the federal government's attention is focused on program delivering and meeting the measures of progress that have been blessed by Congress. There is not a lot of time for the agencies to step back and look into the telescope at what risks might be coming.

That's why I really appreciate the IJC's dedication to, for example, the Great Lakes Early Warning System (or GLEWS), which is designed to look forward to the future threats facing our Great Lakes. This is critical because, too many times, our generation (not to mention our federal, state, municipal, and tribal governments) have a difficult time anticipating and addressing problems ahead of time, when they are less expensive and more effective to resolve, then when we fight rear-guard battles, fixing the problems of the past after they've already caused damage and become more expensive to tackle.

I also appreciate IJC's dedication to public outreach. Because of the same restraints mentioned above, the federal governments don't always have the capability to listen to the public. After all, citizens often see changes to their local eco- systems before they manifest themselves at a regional scale, when they can be brought to agencies' attention. Much of the IJC's power comes from the federal governments knowing that the IJC listens to the public, too.

Thank you for your dedication. Our two countries' love of the Great Lakes is part of what has helped binational relations endure and believe the same will be true going forward, as well.