

GREENPEACE ACTION

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Dear Great Lakes Activist,

Congratulations to all 1989 Hamilton IJC participants! The citizens' agenda was heard loudly and clearly as evidenced by the surprisingly accurate account of our message in Part I of the Fifth Biennial Report on Great Lakes Water Quality. All participants should have received a copy of this report by now. In it, the commissioners state: "The increasing level of public concern for the Great Lakes ecosystem and insistence on governmental response to Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement objectives were strikingly evident, and outspokenly vented." For the first time, the IJC actually responded to public input in a formal report.

In addition, the IJC states the "meeting was remarkable,...in terms of the number of members of the public taking part and the quality of their presentations." The success of the meeting is due primarily to the strength of our basin-wide, unified coalition. The Hamilton meeting proves that the "people" of the Great Lakes Basin have the enthusiasm and energy needed to create the political will and action that is necessary to achieve zero toxic discharge. We are, in fact, already beginning to see tangible results.

In Part II of the Fifth Biennial Report, published today, the IJC is calling for a complete ban of all direct toxic discharges into Lake Superior. This is the toughest policy recommendation the IJC has made to date. In essence, Lake Superior would be used as a test model for zero toxic discharge.

This is a good start, but it is not enough. For two reasons: 1) the IJC's mandate is merely to make recommendations to the two federal governments, not to enforce them; and 2) we need an all medias approach to zero discharge of persistent toxic substances into the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin.

The Hamilton initiative by the "people" of the Great Lakes Basin with the specific focus of the IJC intervention was an excellent start. Groups and individuals from all over the Basin came to the IJC united with a single voice to say: "ZERO TOXIC DISCHARGE NOW." What is now needed is a coordinated and sustained collective effort to achieve our common goal of a basin-wide, all medias, zero toxic discharge policy. Continued intervention in the IJC should be part of what this coalition effort does, but we feel the mission of the coalition should be defined more generally. We would like to see it become an on-going, basin-wide Zero Discharge Alliance (ZDA).

The Hamilton steering committee should be expanded in order to strengthen ZDA's efforts. It should reflect the Basin's ecosystem, be broad-based and include members of the grassroots and Native Peoples communities. In order to follow through on its objectives, a funding mechanism is needed for projects, expenses and travel. The expanded steering committee would be given the task of organizing a ZDA conference (October in Detroit?) that would bring together ZDA participants from across the entire Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin.

All of these ideas will be formally discussed at the Great Lakes United Eighth Annual Meeting in Green Bay, WI May 4-6. A name, a mission statement, a decision-making mechanism and a number of Zero Discharge Alliance projects will be adopted. I strongly encourage all Great Lakes activists who are interested in the ZDA to attend. The meeting will be held at the Best Western Downtowner, 321 S. Washington St., Green Bay, WI, 800-252-2952 in the US, or 800-528-1234. Conference registration fee is \$30.00. Hotel rooms are available at the Best Western for \$43.95 single and \$47.95 double occupancy per night.

For further information about Zero Discharge Alliance contact me at (312) 666-3305. For details about the GLU conference in Green Bay, contact Great Lakes United at (716) 886-0142.

Hamilton 1989 proved that the people of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Basin have a powerful voice that is heeded. And that was only 200 citizens of the Basin. Imagine what an even stronger voice will accomplish! Please let me know your thoughts and ideas about ZDA, and I hope to see you in Green Bay.

Sincerely,



Joan D'Argo

Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Campaign