Research & Monitoring:

When they signed the Agreement, the governments recognized the need for extensive research programs. A regional office of the IJC was set up, partially to oversee research by the states and provinces. A Science Advisory Board was established to provide advice and guidance on research related matters.

Unfortunately, the governments have largely failed to provide adequate funding for research and monitoring since the signing of the Agreement. Annually, there are major legislative debates to acquire funding to maintain or restore research and monitoring programs.

Areas of Concern:

Since initial work under the Agreement began, jurisdictions have recognized certain specific areas such as harbors and river mouths that have serious water pollution problems and do not meet one or more of the Agreement's objectives.

Presently there are 42 areas of concern. All but four of them have toxic problems. Fish consumption advisories are in effect at 31 of the 42 locations.

The "area of concern" label is meant to focus clean-up attention on a specific area. Remedial action plans are to be developed to address the problems. No remedial action plans have been approved to date, though several are being developed and reviewed. None of the areas has been de-listed as an area of concern.

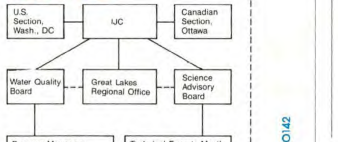
The selection of the 19 citizen hearing locations coincides with many of the areas of concern. Testimony is invited on local water quality problems and the action plans as well as Great Lakes water quality issues in general.

*Hearings to be held in conjunction with the Ohio Environmental Council.

Hearing Schedule:

1. July 10, 7:30 pm — University of Wis. 2200 E Kenwood 2nd Floor, Union Milwaukee, WI.
2. July 14, 6:00 pm — Neville Public Museum Museum Pl. at Main St. bridge Green Bay, WI.
3. July 17, 8:00 pm — City Council Chambers West First Street Duluth, MN
4. Aug. 5, 7:00 pm — Holiday Inn U.S. 41 West Marquette, MI
5. Aug. 7, 7:30 pm — City Council Chambers Court Street Sault Ste. Marie, MI
6. Aug. 19, 7:30 pm — Confederation Room B Howard Johnsons 237 Ontario Street Kingston, ONT.
7. Aug. 21, 7 pm — House of Labour Sydney Street Cornwall, ONT
8. Sept. 8, — Montreal, QUE.
9. Sept. 16, 2 pm — Chicago Cultural Center Randolph & Michigan Chicago, IL
10. Sept. 18, 7 pm — Library Conference Center Indiana University NW Gary, IN.
11. Sept. 22, 7 pm — Gerald R. Ford Museum Pearl St. & U.S. 131 Grand Rapids, MI.
12. Sept. 25, 7 pm — Williams Township Hall 1080 Midland Road Auburn, MI
13. Oct. 7, 6:30 pm — Moot Court Room Law Bldg., Sunset & Univ. University of Windsor Windsor, ONT.
14. Oct. 9, 7 pm — City Hall, Council Chambers 255 North Christina Sarnia, ONT.
15. Oct. 14, 6 pm — Law Center Auditorium University of Toledo Toledo, OH.
16. Oct. 18, 1:30 pm & 6 pm — International Conference Room University Center Cleveland State University Cleveland, OH.
17. Oct. 21, 7 pm — City Hall, Council Chambers 6th & State Erie, PA.
18. Oct. 23, 7:30 pm — City Council Chambers 100 Queen St. W. Toronto, ONT.
19. Oct. 30, 7 pm — County Chambers 7th Floor 25 Delaware Avenue Buffalo, NY

Institutions:



The Report:

At each hearing, a panel of at least three members of the GLU Water Quality Task Force will hear testimony. GLU will prepare a summary of testimony received at all 19 hearings and present it to the governments of both countries. This report will be distributed to everyone who testifies and to policy decision makers throughout the basin and in Washington and Ottawa.

We Need You!

You live in the Great Lakes basin and deal with pollution problems in your area. Tell us what strategies have worked and what problems are still waiting for solutions. The original Agreement was a very useful tool in pressuring jurisdictions to control the phosphorus which was choking the lakes. With your help we can push for a renewed Agreement and apply that same success to the problems still plaguing the lakes.

If the governments decide to rewrite the Agreement, the negotiations may be clouded in diplomatic secrecy. These citizen hearings may be your only opportunity to demonstrate to your government your commitment to the Great Lakes, and to urge them to uphold theirs.

Funding for this project was generously provided by the William H. Donner Foundation Inc. and the Public Welfare Foundation Inc.

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Clip and return to: TIM EDER, Field Coordinator
Great Lakes United, 24 Agassiz Cir., Buffalo, N.Y. 14214 / 716-886-0142

Please sign me up to testify at
(hearing location) _____

Please send me more information on:

- ☐ The 1978 Water Quality Agreement
- ☐ Water Quality issues in my area (please specify) _____
- ☐ Membership in GLU
- ☐ Other _____

Name _____
Organization: _____
Address: _____
State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code _____
Phone ( ) _____
Please sign me up as a member of GLU.
Enclosed is a check for:

- ☐ $100.00 Organizational
- ☐ $15.00 Individual

"An international organization dedicated to conserving and protecting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River"

Citizens Hearings on Great Lakes Water Pollution

July - October 1986

Public Review of the:

1978 U.S. & Canada Water Quality Agreement

by:

GREAT LAKES UNITED

The Project:

Great Lakes United (GLU) is conducting a public review of the 1978 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (the Agreement). Citizens are invited to attend one or more of 19 hearings and present testimony to the GLU Water Quality Task Force. The Task Force will compile the comments and present a report to the U.S. and Canadian Governments in February 1987.

GLU hopes this project will demonstrate to the governments the strength of public support for clean water in the Great Lakes. We believe that the Agreement, though in need of some refinement, is a very strong document that unfortunately, has not been completely implemented, particularly in several polluted areas of the basin. We encourage you to tell us how the Agreement has worked, or not worked, in addressing pollution problems in your area and/or the Great Lakes in general.

The Basin:

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are some of the Earth's most spectacular freshwater resources. The basin is home to 37 million humans, about half of whom get their drinking water directly from the lakes. The system is a vital recreation, sportfishing, transportation and industrial resource to the livelihood and well being of two countries.

The Agreement:

After decades of mismanagement and being used as a waste collector for societies on both sides of the border, it finally became apparent that the lakes were a finite resource requiring special attention. The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, signed in 1972 and amended in 1978, is one of the most innovative instruments ever employed to address international pollution problems. It spells out in very strong language the intent of the governments "to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the waters."

The Agreement sets forth both general objectives and specific guidelines for certain pollutants. The Agreement requires that all water quality standards and regulatory programs adopted by governments at all levels should be consistent with its terms. It was intended that the Agreement would be used to guide state, provincial and local pollution clean-up programs and related research.

The Agreement also spells out procedures for its own review. It compels the International Joint Commission (IJC) to issue biennial reports on the Agreement's effectiveness. After the IJC issues its third biennial report (in 1986), the governments are required to conduct a comprehensive review of the operation and effectiveness of the Agreement.

The Ecosystem Approach:

The Agreement was the first document in International law to recognize the ecosystem approach. This concept means that air, water, land and living organisms (plants, animals and people) interact and are interdependent on each other. In practice, it means we must consider the consequences of our actions on our neighbors downstream and across the border. It means that land management decisions must take into consideration impacts on water and air.

Despite their signatures on the Agreement, the governments have repeatedly failed to incorporate the ecosystem approach when making decisions about the Great Lakes.

Nutrients/Phosphorus:

Pollution control efforts in the 60's and 70's were aimed at controlling phosphorus and other nutrients which were causing rapid weed growth, algae blooms, oxygen depletion, foaming and sudsing. The terms of the Agreement are very specific about control of phosphorus. Total allowable phosphorus loads per year for each of the lakes are spelled out. A ban on household detergents containing more than .5% phosphorus is called for. Maximum phosphorus concentrations in large municipal sewage treatment plants are specified.

Substantial progress has been made toward these goals. Foaming and sudsing has been reduced and algae and weed growth has been slowed. Nonetheless, eutrophication (premature aging) in the lakes has not been completely arrested. Pennsylvania and Ohio have not enacted detergent phosphate bans, and Ontario only limits phosphates in their detergents to 2.2%. At least seven major municipal sewage treatment plants exceed their phosphorus limitations year after year.

Toxics:

"It is the policy of the parties that the discharge of toxic substances in toxic amounts be prohibited and the discharge of any or all persistent toxic substances be virtually eliminated." Article II (a) 1978 Water Quality Agreement.

Progress towards achieving this goal has been disappointing. Over 800 chemicals have been identified in the lakes. They enter the lakes via fallout from the atmosphere, ground water moving through hazardous waste sites as well as municipal and industrial discharge, and rural and urban runoff. Presently a major contaminant in Lake Superior is toxaphene, an insecticide which gets into the lake almost exclusively through the air.

Dioxin is contaminating lake trout near Toronto and wildlife in the St. Lawrence River. Leaking dumpsites on the Niagara River are the likely source. The U.S. Superfund program has identified approximately 120 dumpsites in the Great Lakes basin.

Residents of the Great Lakes basin have the distinction of carrying a higher body burden of toxic chemicals than comparable groups. Toxics are known to cause reproductive failure and deformities in wildlife (see photo) and cancerous tumors in fish. Seven of the Great Lakes states and both Canadian provinces advise residents to limit fish consumption.

Photo - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Much more remains to be learned about the transport and fate of toxics. We need to know more about their biotic and human health impacts. Almost all studies to date have focused on the impact of single compounds acting alone. Virtually none have looked at cumulative or synergistic (combined) effects of chemical toxicants known to be present in Great Lakes' waters. And finally, we need to know more about how to safely dispose of hazardous and solid wastes.