



International Upper Great Lakes Study



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U.S. Congress Briefed on Status of International Upper Great Lakes Study

Congressional leaders and staff from both the House and Senate were briefed recently by members of the International Upper Great Lakes Study Board. The binational, independent study is examining whether possible physical changes in the St. Clair River may be a cause of low water levels and whether the management of outflows from Lake Superior might be improved to take into consideration changing interests and changing climate.

Key items for discussion were the recent decision to expedite the study to produce a report a year ahead of schedule, the extensive work that is already underway on the St. Clair River, the plans for broad outreach to include the public, and the limitations on the mandate of the study to address the question of immediate mitigation. The Study Board also stressed the importance of both the U.S. and Canada providing funding after the study to operate and maintain gauges in the connecting channels that measure water levels and flows.

“We were encouraged by their receptiveness to our focus on sound science and appreciate their offers of help to further the aims of the study,” said Dr. Gene Stakhiv, U.S. co-chair of the Study Board.

“In particular, I was impressed that Rep. Candice Miller stressed the importance of taking the time to get the science right and the need to engage the public before any action is taken,” said Kay Felt, Study Board member and U.S co-chair of the study’s Public Interest Advisory Group.

The briefing also included a look at preliminary findings of the study, including videography of the St. Clair River bed, showing there does not appear to be ongoing erosion in the videographed areas.