



COMPENDIUM OF CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AGREEMENTS AND INSTRUMENTS

Agreement between Canada and the United States for Water Supply and Flood Control in the Souris River Basin

SUBJECT CATEGORY:

Freshwater

TYPE OF AGREEMENT / INSTRUMENT:

Canada – United States

FORM:

Legally-binding treaty

STATUS:

- Signed and effective October 26, 1989.
- Apportionment provisions amended in 1995 due to a dispute over interpretation of the original apportionment provisions of the Agreement.
- December 2000 Amendment to the Agreement Between Canada and the United States for the Water Supply and Flood Control of the Souris River Basin.

LEAD & PARTNER DEPARTMENTS:

Lead: Global Affairs Canada

Partner: Environment and Climate Change Canada

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Web Links:

- Text of the 1989 agreement: [Canada Treaty Information](#) website
- [IJC](#) website
- [International Souris River Board](#) website

Contacts:

[ECCC Inquiry Centre](#)

COMPENDIUM EDITION:

January 2020

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY

This legally binding treaty between Canada and the United States concerns two dams in the Souris River basin in Saskatchewan. Its main goal is to maintain Canada's water supply, as well as ensure proper flood control is maintained from the US' perspective. This agreement, led by Global Affairs Canada, allows for the monitoring of water and ensures its quality. Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) provides this data to the Board responsible for implementing the agreement. Further, ECCC works closely with the province of Saskatchewan, as well as Manitoba, on this agreement.

OBJECTIVE

The agreement provides for the construction, maintenance, and operation of the Rafferty and Alameda dams and other works by Canada in the Souris River basin in Saskatchewan for the purposes of water supply in Canada and flood control in the United States.

The agreement also established the Water Quality Monitoring Group, which administers a joint water quality program.

KEY ELEMENTS

Apportionment provisions are administered by the International Joint Commission (IJC) through the International Souris River Board.

In 2000, diplomatic notes were exchanged between Canada and the United States that established an amendment to the 1989 agreement that moved the duties of the Water Quality Monitoring Group to the IJC.

In 2006, the IJC's International Souris River Board was reconstituted with a new order with responsibilities for the water quality program under the agreement.

The new board had six members from Canada (Environment and Climate Change Canada and the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba), and six US members. In 2015/16, the membership was expanded to include 6 additional public members (three from Canada and three from the US). Currently, the board

has 8 Canadian Members and 8 American Members, a Canadian and American Co-Chair and a Canadian and American Secretary.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The Agreement is intended to provide a combination of water supply for Canada, and flood control for the United States, and provides for the administration of a joint water quality program.

CANADA'S INVOLVEMENT

Under the terms of the Agreement, all operational responsibilities related to construction, maintenance, and operation of the dams were delegated to the province of Saskatchewan.

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) is the lead. Environment and Climate Change Canada supports the International Souris River Board, and provides staff to sit on the board and sub-committees.

In its support role to the board, Environment and Climate Change Canada:

- provides water quantity and quality monitoring of the Souris River in the Saskatchewan and Manitoba portions of the basin as well as at the boundary crossings;
- provides meteorological information for use in apportionment calculations; and
- calculates the apportionment of the water.

RESULTS / PROGRESS

Activities

Environment and Climate Change Canada provides annual water quantity and quality monitoring data to the IJC board and calculates annual natural flows in Saskatchewan to allow determination of the apportionment of the river. Environment and Climate Change Canada actively participates in the Hydrology Committee and is responsible for documenting apportionment procedures and is a member of the Core Committee to review and update the operating plan within the context of the existing Agreement. Environment and Climate Change Canada also sends staff to attend and participate in IJC board meetings.

Reports

The International Souris River Board produces an annual report to the IJC summarizing how apportionment was met and discussing water quality monitoring results in consideration of water quality objectives at the border.

When significant floods occur, the US Army Corps of Engineers produces a report on the operations that transpired and documents that its operations were in accordance with the agreed operating plan under the agreement.

Results

Following severe flooding in 2011, the International Souris River Board established a task force to produce a Plan of Study for the review of the water supply and operating plan contained in the Agreement. The task force provided this Plan of Study to the IJC, which subsequently submitted its recommendations to governments in June of 2013. In the absence of a reference for the Plan of Study, recommendations were reviewed, revised, and re-submitted in 2016.