



Potential ~~t~~ro&Tms with Cross-Border Water Issues:

In British Columbia, the Columbia River originates in Canada but eventually flows to the U.S. The 1964 Columbia River Treaty required Canada to build three dams on the upper Columbia to control flooding and maximize power production in the U.S. part of the watershed. Half the power generated was to have been Canada's. But the B.C. government negotiated a lump payment of \$254 million instead. This sum did not even pay for dam construction. The anadromous salmon runs on the Canadian portion of the Columbia have been totally blocked by hydro dams. There was also considerable dama

Human demand

Human demand for water is increasing greatly in the areas described above, where water is in increasingly short supply. Both urban and suburban populations are growing rapidly in the northern U.S. and southern Canada. Intra-country migration has amplified problems in some areas. For example, there has been a massive migration of people from the “rust belt” states of the Great Lakes, where heavy industry once employed many, to the still relatively pristine areas of the eastern slopes of the Rockies and the adjacent Great Plains. In Canada, there has been a similar migration from eastern provinces where jobs are scarce to wealthy Alberta, where jobs in the oil industry and construction are plentiful. Calgary, already 1,000,000 people, is expanding in area at almost 5% per year. Canmore, at the very gateway to Banff National Park, is growing at a similar rate. If current growth rates continue, in 50 years, there will be some huge urban

Alien species

There are great differences between the biotas of northern vs. southern watersheds. There are many species that are endemic to the Mississippi and Colorado systems that never reached the Saskatchewan-Nelson, the St. Lawrence, or the Athabasca-Peace-Slave Mackenzie drainages. It is simply not known what mixing of the continent's aquatic fauna and flora would do to the ecological integrity of a given aquatic drainage. There are enough examples to know that the probability is high that at least a few alien invaders will harm the native species of any ecosystem. The sea lamprey, zebra mussels, opossum shrimp, common carp, Eurasian milfoil,

U.S. The enormous damage to rivers, lakes and aboriginal society has been considered as an “externality” in these arrangements to ship “virtual water.”

To satisfy this American hunger for cheap hydro power, Canadians have already made more inter-basin transfers of water than any other nation. It seems somewhat hypocritical that what is unacceptable between nations because of great ecological damage (i.e. the Souris or Great Lakes) should be re

federal water policies and administration. Issues treated ranged from drinking water safety and water export to research support and intergovernmental arrangements. In 1987, a Federal Water Policy was tabled in Parliament. It was never fully implemented, for reasons that remain obscure. Since that time, water has been de-emphasized in Canadian environmental policy, under both Liberal and Conservative parties. Research has also been severely cut in both the Department of Environment and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The Inland Waters Directorate of Environment Canada, which was to implement most of the new policy, was disbanded in the early 1990s. Even funding for the old Canada Water Act was cut to a few percent of expenditures in the 1970s and 1980s (Pearse and Quinn 1996). In view of the now-recognized problems with drinking water and the impending international problems outlined above, these actions appear to be dangerously short-sighted. Clearly, Canada's water protection capabilities are adrift, as pointed out by the Auditor-General of Canada in her 2001 report.

Canada's position on boundary waters needs to be strengthened

In recent years, the federal government appears to be stepping away from some of its Canada-U.S. water responsibilities. The Annex 2001 process is a good example. The issue of diversions from boundary waters is clearly one of federal responsibility. The public comment period concerning the proposed Annex Agreements is almost over and the Canadian Government has failed to make formal comment.. In practical terms these proposed agreements would weaken Canada's capability to protect Canadian interests under the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. This is clearly a case where Canadian interests would have been better served with federal negotiations, using the Boundary Waters Treaty provisions regarding diversions as leverage. Similarly, responsibility for water, now spread among several federal and provincial agencies, needs consolidating into coherent and uniform policies for research and management.

MOTION

"This Conference requests that the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada:

- *revisit and follow up on recommendations made in the major work done in 2001 on water issues in the Great Lakes,*
- *expand the geographic coverage to all transboundary waters and issues,*
- *report to Parliament and Canadians within one year on the status of implementation of her recommendations and the state of water policy in Canada, and*
- *make further recommendations for improvement as necessary."*

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