

International Joint Commission
Canada and United States



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October 19, 2007

The Honorable Brian A. Schweitzer
Governor of Montana
Helena, MT 59620-0801

Premier Ed Stelmach
Office of the Premier
Room 307, Legislature Building
10800 – 97th Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Governor Schweitzer:

Dear Premier Stelmach:

On July 20, as a follow up to our meetings with each of you, we sent the draft of a letter, that ultimately would be directed to you, to contacts we had in your respective governments. The purpose of sending the draft (enclosed) was to seek comments on how we might improve the formal letter to the two of you. Feedback regarding our draft has been quite positive. It has included the Governor's direct response (enclosed) as well as verbal comments from Alberta. We thank you both for the prompt and serious consideration given to our draft.

Clearly there is a shared interest in beginning Governor/Premier level discussions concerning the use and management of the St. Mary/Milk Rivers. We are pleased that this is the case. We continue to believe that the approach outlined in our draft provides the best opportunity for real progress now and into the future. In particular, we think that an early initial meeting between the two of you can set the process in motion and lead to your establishment of a small group to explore the fundamental and interrelated issues of collaboration on the use and management of transboundary waters, cooperation on the rehabilitation of the St. Mary Canal, and future arrangements for increasing the ability of each country to better access the full amount of water available to it under the current apportionment. We also think that this group should initially be composed of senior officials from Montana and Alberta who have your confidence and the U.S.–Canada St. Mary and Milk Rivers field representatives who are responsible for implementing the current apportionment.

While it is important that this group be asked to report back to you in fairly short order, the experience of the group, which could be referred to as an "interim watershed council", could point the way to more comprehensive consultations or arrangements in the future.

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Thank you again for meeting with us earlier this year to discuss the extremely important issues regarding water use in the St. Mary and Milk Rivers basins. All Commissioners and staff are available to provide you with additional information or any other support you might find to be helpful.

Sincerely,



The Honorable Allen I. Olson
Commissioner, U.S. Section



The Honorable Jack Blaney
Commissioner, Canadian Section

Enclosures