

ST. MARYS RIVER

BINATIONAL PUBLIC ADVISORY COUNCIL



Mr. Mark Chambers  
Senior Program Coordinator  
Great Lakes Area of Concern  
Regional Director General's Office – Ontario  
Environment & Climate Change Canada  
867 Lakeshore Rd., Burlington, Ontario L7S 1A1

February 21, 2017

**RE: Degradation of Aesthetics Beneficial Use Impairment for Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario**

Dear Mr. Chambers,

On behalf of the Binational Public Advisory Council (BPAC) for the St. Marys River Area of Concern (AOC), we are writing to convey agreement regarding the removal of the Degradation of Aesthetics Beneficial Use Impairment from the Canadian side of the AOC.

The restoration criteria for this BUI states that “This beneficial use will no longer be impaired when comprehensive tests of the Area of Concern’s water quality demonstrate the river is devoid of any substances that produce a persistent objectionable deposit, unnatural colour or turbidity, or unnatural odour, and is free from persistent or reoccurring problems associated with degraded aesthetics”. Based on these delisting criteria, we are confident that the criteria have been met. Data collected through the 2013-2015 water quality study conducted by Algoma University found no evidence of persistent objectionable deposits (i.e., sheens, oil, grease, solids or scums). There were also no persistent issues noted with respect to colour or odour. Although variation in turbidity at the Echo Bay and Richards Landing locations are somewhat concerning, the overall turbidity was low. The shallow bathymetry at these locations combined with wind and precipitation events likely contributed to the observed ranges, and as such, we believe that not all of the turbidity observed was attributable to anthropogenic activities.

Although *Didymo* has been recently observed in the rapids near Sault Ste. Marie, we understand that the presence of this potentially nuisance diatom may be indicative of low nutrient conditions, as opposed to the nutrient-enriched conditions typically associated with other algal blooms. As this algae is naturally occurring and an integral part of the lake ecosystem, we do not consider the presence of this algae to be of detriment to aesthetics. Thus, with these factors considered, BPAC members present at the February 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 meeting voted unanimously to support the removal of this BUI.

Sincerely,

Paula Antunes, Ph.D.  
Canadian BPAC Chair

Emily Martin  
U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair