



## RESPONSE TO PETITION

Prepare in English and French marking 'Original Text' or 'Translation'

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PETITION No.: **421-02014**

BY: **MR. BLAIKIE (ELMWOOD-TRANSCONA)**

DATE: **January 31, 2018**

PRINT NAME OF SIGNATORY: **SIGNED BY THE HONOURABLE CHRYSIA FREELAND**

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Response by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

SIGNATURE

Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

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SUBJECT

**Protection of the environment**

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**ORIGINAL TEXT**

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**REPLY**

The Government of Canada has long been opposed to the proposed Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS) Project and the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) in North Dakota due to the potential risks to Canadian waters associated with the inter-basin transfer of invasive biota into the Hudson Bay watershed. Canada's concerns about these inter-basin water diversion projects have been expressed to the Government of the United States and in U.S. courts on many occasions over several decades.

Pursuant to Article IX of the *Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909*, in 1975 the Governments of Canada and the United States provided the International Joint Commission (IJC) with a Reference to examine the Garrison Diversion Project; an inter-basin water transfer to the Hudson Bay basin similar to components included in the NAWS project and RRVWSP. In its 1977 Report, "Transboundary Implications of the Garrison Diversion Unit", the IJC concluded that biota and disease transfer could cause "severe and irreversible damage to the ecosystem and, in particular to the commercial and sport fisheries in Canada". The IJC recommended that construction of portions of the project that could impact waters flowing into Canada could only be undertaken if the two countries agreed that the water treatment methods selected were proven to "eliminate the risk of biota transfer, or if the question of biota transfer is agreed to be no longer a matter of concern".

The IJC's recommendations have formed the basis of Canada's engagement with the United States since the release of the 1977 report. Despite the evolution in the consideration of treatment options for the NAWS, the Government of Canada continues to reiterate ongoing concerns about either the NAWS or RRVWSP proceeding because the risk of biota transfer remains and Canada and the United States have not agreed that the question of biota transfer is no longer a matter of concern.

The Government of Canada reiterates these concerns with the Government of the United States during semi-annual meetings and in other fora as appropriate, highlighting the need for our two countries to work together to look for opportunities to make progress on this issue.