

US, Canada to update Great Lakes water agreement

June 14 2009, By CAROLYN THOMPSON , Associated Press Writer



Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon, right, answers questions about Iran's election results after a news conference in Niagara Falls, Canada, Saturday June 13, 2009. He was there with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, left, to help celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909 between the two countries, Canada and the United States. (AP Photo/Robert Kirkham)

(AP) -- The United States and Canada say they will update a key agreement to protect the Great Lakes from invasive species, climate change and other established and emerging threats to the world's biggest surface freshwater system.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Saturday that the [Great Lakes](#) Water Quality Agreement, which was last amended in 1987, is no longer sufficient.

She announced the deal to revise it - something environmental groups have been pushing for - with Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lawrence Cannon during a ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of the Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909. The treaty created an international commission to settle water-related disputes between the two countries.

"It's crucial that we honor the terms of the Great Lakes agreement as it stands today," Clinton said on the international Rainbow Bridge with Niagara Falls as a backdrop. "But we also have to update it to reflect new knowledge, new technology, and, unfortunately, new threats."

The agreement commits the United States and Canada to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the Great Lakes Basin ecosystem. Since the agreement was first signed in 1972, levels of polychlorinated biphenyls, mercury, dioxin and other pollutants have dropped and the lakes have seen the return of the bald eagle and other species.

But Great Lakes states and provinces have worried in recent years that the cleanup has lost momentum amid new threats from the growing population, new chemicals and [climate change](#).

"Today the Great Lakes face a number of new challenges and as a result, we are taking new steps to protect them," Cannon said. "We will work together to make sure that citizens of both countries have access to safe, clean, healthy water."

Cannon and Clinton met privately after the ceremony on other issues, including Canada's opposition to the "buy American" provision in the U.S. federal stimulus bill, which requires the use of U.S.-manufactured products on projects that accept money from the stimulus. Since the provision was introduced, Canadian companies have said they have had trouble winning government contracts in U.S. states and cities, something

Clinton said would be looked at.

At a brief news conference, the leaders also addressed turmoil over Iran's disputed election results and the new U.N. penalties against North Korea meant to check the communist nation's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons.

On the Net:

Boundary Waters Treaty: <http://tinyurl.com/l4fkca>

©2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: US, Canada to update Great Lakes water agreement (2009, June 14) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-06-canada-great-lakes-agreement.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--