

Honored guests, Canadian and American friends, and visitors from other lands, welcome. There could be no more fitting place to celebrate the centennial of the Boundary Waters Treaty than here in Niagara Falls, a truly bi-national city united, rather than divided, by the river that runs through it.

The spirit of friendship and cooperation that has marked the organization and staging of this celebration is a direct outgrowth of the tradition of consensus-based decision-making that has characterized the International Joint Commission since its inception. The IJC is a model of international cooperation that could well be emulated by nations around the world as they search for peaceful methods to resolve issues related to cooperative management of scarce and often threatened resources.

In communities here on the border, we have a long history of jointly commemorating our shared triumphs and tribulations as military allies in the 20th century. Now, we stand at the beginning of a new century full of new challenges. We citizens of the cross-border region are confident that the same bonds of trust and goodwill that have served us well in times of war will form the foundation for the next hundred years of successful collaboration as we address emerging issues of the economy and the environment.

We who live our lives every day in sight of the border and of this great Niagara River must be especially careful never to take for granted the things that are most precious to us: the abundance of fresh water with which we have been blessed; the clean, renewable energy that it allows us to produce; and the love and friendship of our neighbors across the river.

Mayor Salci has already extended thanks on behalf of the committee to many people responsible for organizing this great event. By I want to extend a special thanks to my Canadian friend and counterpart Mayor Ted Salci, who everyday embodies all that is good about the great nation of Canada—and that is quite a lot.

The last hundred years of binational cooperation along the border have been a model for peaceful resolution of international issues. There is much for which we should be thankful. The future no doubt holds both challenges and opportunities as we face issues of climate change, water scarcity and energy shortage on a global level. But here in Niagara Falls, we are confident that when our descendants look back on the next hundred years of the Boundary Waters Treaty and International Joint Commission, they will declare, “that was their finest hour.”