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ENERGY IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION: IMAGINING A SHARED STRATEGY

Sara L. Seck

ABSTRACT: This article will reflect upon what it might mean to devise an energy strategy for the Great Lakes region in light of our shared responsibility as stewards of a globally significant fresh water resource at a time of increasing water scarcity associated with climate change. The article argues that we must not let short-term economic fears drive our decision-making or risk adopting policies that will prove detrimental to the long-term futures of our children’s children.

INTRODUCTION

The launch of the Council of the Great Lakes Region (CGLR) in April 2013 provides an opportunity to reflect upon what it might mean to imagine a shared strategy for energy policy in the North American Great Lakes Region. As highlighted at the launch conference, the region is defined by a great and shared resource — indeed, one of the greatest in the world. The Great Lakes, a “chain of five large freshwater lakes covering an area of 95,000 square miles,” are the “largest lake group in the world” and contain approximately “18% of the world’s surface fresh water stores.”1 Representing “84% of North America’s fresh water supply,” the Great Lakes “provide drinking water to over 40 million households” in Canada and the United States.2 Given the importance of this critical resource to the region, indeed, to the world, it is vital that governance systems ensure that the quality and quantity of Great Lakes water is protected for both present and future generations. Sadly, as was evident during the CGLR launch panel discussion entitled “Water Governance in the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Region,” this is a time of concern for water in the region, with low water levels and other negative impacts being attributed in part to the challenges of climate change.

Global carbon emissions are clearly linked to energy policy, yet the impact of climate change on the Great Lakes is not exclusively caused by greenhouse gas (GNG) emissions originating from the Great Lakes region.3 Climate change

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2 Id.
is a global problem that does not respect state or regional borders. Similarly, many energy choices involve the exploitation of natural resources, such as oil & gas, or uranium for nuclear power, that leave a large environmental footprint not contained within the borders of a single state or region. Yet “green” energy choices such as large-scale wind turbines, have been subject to critique for alleged impacts on local environmental health as well as protected species and migratory birds.

Formulating an energy strategy that embraces the essential need for sustainability in the region might seem easy if decision-making was guided purely by concerns with contributing to the avoidance of long-term significant environmental harms on a global scale. But sustainability thinking traditionally embraces a balancing of environment with economic and social concerns. Even while arguably, this balance would over the long-term align with global concerns, the process of devising an energy strategy must in reality confront economic and social challenges that create political pressures for short-term quick-fix solutions. Increasingly, scholars are highlighting that sustainability thinking must also confront the reality of climate change, with some proposing that the concept of resilience may be better suited to decision-making in the Anthropocene than sustainability.4

This article will reflect upon what it might mean to devise an energy strategy for the Great Lakes region in light of our shared responsibility as stewards of a globally significant fresh water resource at a time of increasing water scarcity associated with climate change. These reflections will touch upon another theme evident at the CGLR launch – the struggle that the region is facing in economic and employment terms as a consequence of the global economic downturn. The article will argue that we must not let short-term economic fears drive our decision-making or risk adopting policies that will prove detrimental to the long-term futures of our children’s children. Drawing upon established principles of international environmental law, and guided by new understandings of the responsibilities of business to respect human rights, the paper will argue that whatever energy strategy is endorsed in the region, it must be one that is developed through an inclusive process that respectfully embraces the challenges put forward by indigenous peoples, and environmentally-concerned individuals and communities. Ultimately, it is crucial that decision-makers in the Great Lakes region no longer deceive themselves into thinking that environmental and economic concerns must be “balanced” off against one another – in truth, these concerns and the future of the Great Lakes region are inextricably intertwined.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Energy law has traditionally been:

Focused on the extraction and production of energy resources with specific goals of short-term efficiency and economic growth. The field has substantively covered in general (1) electricity generation, transmission, and markets, including the laws governing the production, transportation, and sale of fuels used for electricity generation such as nuclear energy, coal, and natural gas; (2) the laws governing fuels used in transportation such as oil and biofuels; and, more recently (3) renewable energy including wind, solar, hydropower, and geothermal energy.  

Environmental law, on the other hand:

Has focused primarily on conservation and protection of land, water, air, species, and resources for purposes of protecting human health as well as for long-term preservation of environmental, culture, and aesthetic values. On a structural level, environmental law did not grow out of economic regulation like energy law, but instead focused on risk assessment and the creation of regulatory tools to limit the environmental impacts of an industrialized society, leading to command-and-control regulation for industrial and other sources of pollution.

Increasingly, scholars are arguing that to solve contemporary problems environmental and energy law must converge. From a sustainability perspective, it is crucial that energy choices involve an integrated consideration of economic, social and environmental concerns. Importantly, this requires grappling with the full life cycle assessment of environmental impacts of each choice, from raw material extractions through use to recycling and ultimate disposal, including risk assessment of accidents. An energy strategy in the Great Lakes region should naturally focus much environmental concern upon water, and, indeed, the “inextricably linked” nature of energy and water has been clearly recognized by the Great Lakes Commission. The next parts will sketch what it might mean to consider a variety of energy choices in this way.

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6 Klass, *supra* note 5, at 185-86.

7 Davies, *supra* note 5, at 507; Amy J. Wildermuth, *The Next Step: The Integration of Energy Law and Environmental Law*, 31:2 Utah Envtl. L. Rev. 369 (2011). See also Klass, *id.* at 187 (noting that when attention is paid to state law, law school teaching, and firm practice groups, the convergence is already evident).


FOSSIL FUELS

A significant portion of the energy use in the Great Lakes region comes from fossil fuels, which are important contributors of GHGs. Indeed, fossil fuels provide about 80% of world energy needs. Much discussion at the CGLR launch panel “Shared Energy Resources and Strategies in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Region” focused upon the importance of natural gas for the region, due to discoveries of shale gas deposits together with the development of hydraulic fracturing technologies that facilitate the extraction of deposits which were previously technologically and economically unfeasible. The potential of natural gas extraction to synergize with economic linkages in the Great Lakes region was highlighted through, for example, a reconfiguring of regional auto-plant manufacturing to support the use of natural gas fuel in regional and even global transportation.

The two CGLR launch conference speakers who focused their remarks on the advantages of natural gas, downplayed environmentalist’s concerns with the negative impacts of horizontal hydraulic fracturing. Yet, these concerns clearly exist, and include the venting and flaring of natural gas with the resultant increase in GHG emissions, reduced incentives to move away from fossil fuels due to the low cost of natural gas extraction, thereby exacerbating climate change, and increased impacts on wildlife. In addition, serious concerns are raised with regard to water. For example, according to Schroek & Karisny, the integrity of Great Lakes water:

[I]s threatened by the practice of high-volume, slick-water hydraulic fracturing (or fracking) in the Great Lakes basin. This technique, used to “stimulate” oil and natural gas wells, allowing for increased production,
requires the use of millions of gallons of water and has the potential to cause significant water depletion and aquifer contamination.  

Contamination concerns arise due to the use of chemicals additives in fracking fluids which are injected into the ground together with large quantities of water and sand, the precise nature of which are often kept secret for commercial confidentiality reasons. As a result of these concerns, local community protests against proposed fracking developments are increasingly evident around the world.

Thus, local environmental concerns with the potential for water pollution impacts are raised in connection with natural gas fracking, even as proponents advocate that natural gas could serve a global need as a transition fuel to a carbon-free future, due to its lower GHG emissions when compared to coal.

While a comprehensive comparison is beyond the scope of this article, it is clear that at present there is no consistency in the environmental regulation of hydraulic fracturing in the Great Lakes region. Notably, while hydraulic fracturing is exempt from some environmental regulations in the United States, the province of Quebec recently proposed a temporary moratorium on hydro-fracking due to concern over potential environmental impacts; a decision for which the Canadian government is likely to be sued under NAFTA as it has been for an earlier similar proposal. The most recent Quebec bill, if passed, would

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20 Schroeck & Karisny, supra note 17, at 1180. See also Christopher S. Kulander, Shale Oil and Gas State Regulatory Issues and Trends, 63 Case W. Res. L. Rev. 1101, 119-129 (2013) (laws regulating shale oil and gas in Ohio and Pennsylvania).

place a moratorium on all hydraulic fracking in the St. Lawrence Region and remain in effect until the province enacts new legislation on hydraulic fracking or until five years have passed. Yet, while the state of Michigan “banned oil & gas drilling under the Great Lakes in 2002”, as did the US federal government in 2005, Ontario currently allows it and “has over 500 (onshore and offshore) wells producing natural gas from ‘under the bed of Lake Erie.’”

Although not the subject of the CGLR panel discussion, consideration of energy choices in the North American Great Lakes region must, at least from a Canadian perspective, also take seriously the role of the Alberta oil sands, a magnet for controversy in Canada-United States relations in 2013 due to the Keystone XL pipeline proposal, and a key component of any discussions of Canadian energy strategy. To the extent that fossil fuels and oil in particular are considered essential to the North American economy, oil from Alberta is often said to be the best choice, a conflict-free alternative in a world where revenues from oil extraction have all too often propped up regimes of questionable merit, or contributed to violent internal conflicts. However, beyond the global climate change implications of increased fossil fuel development (carbon capture and storage technology notwithstanding), bitumen extraction from the oil sands is itself not without local controversy, due to concerns of First Nations and environmentalists over water use, negative impacts on caribou herds, and environmental pollution more generally.


http://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/cuslj/vol39/iss2/6
The Keystone XL Pipeline is not the only controversial pipeline proposal in the works, with the Northern Gateway pipeline and Line 9 reversal also receiving much attention in Canada. While First Nations resistance to the Northern Gateway pipeline is clearly evident in the Yinka Dene Alliance, the local environmental impacts of fossil fuel refining rarely seems to draw much attention. According to the work of Dayna Scott, “energy infrastructure decisions, such as those to build pipelines, create complex systems of interconnection and exchange amongst natural, social, economic, and built environments.” Cumulative impacts on the health and environment of communities like Sarnia, Ontario and the Aamjiwnaang First Nation are often hidden from view, although the recent Chemical Valley Charter Challenge of environmental approvals claiming that cumulative impacts violate the right to life of the Aamjiwnaang might, if successful, have the power to change this dynamic. Yet the reality is often one of conflicted local communities, seeking jobs on the one hand, yet on the other hoping that job-seekers and their families will not pay too steep a price in health and environmental terms. The same can be said at many sites along the path of fossil fuel production and distribution, with the tragedy at Lac Mégantic in Quebec this summer highlighting the spatial dimensions of the environmental and social costs associated with fossil fuel dependence, here arising en route by train.

Whether a global or local environmental perspective is taken on fossil fuel extraction and the Great Lakes, a heavy and spatially diverse environmental footprint is evident. Troubling, from a Canadian perspective, has been the attitude of our federal government to environmentalists and First Nations communities who try to raise awareness of these global and local environmental concerns, wishing to contribute to, and participate in processes of decision-making over these important and complex choices. Increasingly, they have been shut out as “interested parties” must prove “direct impacts” before their


31 Scott, supra note 28, at 84.

32 Id.


voices are considered relevant enough to merit a hearing. Instead, the deceptive language of economic development has prevailed, in denial of the inextricable interconnections between economy, environment and society, even in the face of recent climate harms such as the Calgary and Toronto floods.

An additional and often not discussed dimension of energy production from fossil fuels by way of thermoelectric power generation is its circular relationship with water in the Great Lakes. As discussed in a recent report of the Great Lakes Commission:

Energy in the form of electric power and fossil fuel consumption is used to pump, convey, store, heat and treat water. On the other hand, the power sector withdraws more water than any other sector in the United States and is heavily dependent upon available water resources.

This observation reinforces the conclusion that energy, water and environment in the Great Lakes Basin are, indeed, “inextricably linked.”

OTHER SOURCES: NUCLEAR, HYDRO & WIND ENERGY

Notably, it is not just fossil fuels that are implicated in the energy/water linkage; nuclear energy in the Great Lakes region also involves thermoelectric power production with implications for Great Lakes water. While nuclear energy is sometimes spoken of as a green energy solution due to the lack of GHG emissions, a full life cycle assessment of nuclear energy production reveals a less green footprint. For nuclear energy to proceed, uranium must first be extracted, a process that has faced local community resistance due to concerns


39 Id. at 3.

40 Id.

41 Id. at 10.

with radioactive waste. While large-scale nuclear accidents have so far (to public knowledge) been few, those that have occurred have been associated with tragic and long-term consequences for local communities, as well as transboundary harms often reaching far beyond the borders of the state of origin. Indeed, the recent Fukushima accidents in Japan have highlighted the troubling implications of such accidents, particularly at a time when unforeseen and catastrophic weather events are on the rise due to climate change. Extraction and potentially hazardous accidents are not the only concern with nuclear energy, however, as disposal of nuclear waste raises long-term sustainability challenges, with proposals to ship nuclear waste in the form of spent fuel through the Great Lakes in order to pursue recycling possibilities in other jurisdictions subject to challenge by First Nations and environmentalists in Ontario.

A second alternative to fossil fuels that was discussed during the CLGR launch energy panel is the potential of hydro-electricity. Here it was suggested that the “inter-connected electricity system between Canada and the US, with significant further enhancements, has the potential to become a powerful regional asset to allow a vast number of distant and dispersed generation sources (hydro, renewable energy in the context of sustainable development, in IPP Special Report on Renewable Energy Sources and Climate Change Mitigation 740 (2011), http://srren.ipcc-wg3.de/report/IPCC_SRREN_Ch09.pdf. See also Uranium Mining Protests Gain Traction in Quebec, HazMat Mag. (Mar. 21, 2013), http://www.hazmatmag.com/news/uranium-mining-protests-gain-traction-in-quebec/1002157783/ (on recent protests and the push to ban uranium mining in Quebec).


46 Panel Remarks by Dr. Jatin Nathwani, Executive Director, Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy and Professor, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Waterloo. See also Nathwani & Chen, supra note 42.
wind, nuclear, bioenergy, geothermal) to play an active part in an integrated market that is responsive to the challenge of decarbonizing the North American energy economy. Notably, Canada has what Nathwani and Chen call a “green energy advantage” with total electricity generation in Canada in 2010 including 61% hydro and 18% coal, compared to 6.2% hydro and 44.8% coal in the United States. Accordingly, large-scale electricity trade, based in part on further development of hydro power, could serve as a solution. However, as with other energy sources discussed so far in this article, hydroelectric development is not without its opponents due to social and environmental impacts of new projects, with particular concerns raised over the flooding of land and relocation of people.

A third alternative to fossil fuels that has received much attention in the Great Lakes region is the potential of wind energy. While development of wind energy in the Great Lakes region has been encouraged by government policies and, at least in the United States, the commitment of the Great Lakes Commission through its Great Lakes Wind Collaborative, Ontario appears to have fallen out of step. Initially Ontario was arguably a trailblazer in the promotion of green energy and wind with the 2009 Green Energy Act and the system of renewable energy approvals (REAs). However, the setback requirements for industrial wind turbines have come under fire from citizens concerned about possible health implications, and municipal pressure to no longer be excluded from the expedited approval process has prevailed. Concerns over migratory birds and endangered species have also been raised in relation to wind turbines, drawing a global or transboundary element into an otherwise local siting issue.

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48 Nathwani & Chen, id at 4.
49 Nathwani & Chen, id at 11-12.
51 Great Lakes Wind Collaborative, : http://www.glc.org/energy/wind/
54 Northey, id. at 148.
57 Alliance to Protect Prince Edward County v Director, Ministry of Environment, 2013 REA No. 13-002 (first rejection ofREA, based upon species protection); re migratory birds see Joshua Wise, Keep Wind Turbines out of Important Bird Areas (Oct. 2, 2012), http://www.ontarionature.org/connect/blog/keep-wind-turbines-out-of-important-bird-areas.
The above brief and incomplete survey of energy choices in the Great Lakes region has served to highlight the complexity of energy/environment/water linkages associated with the most often discussed sources of energy in the region. There are, of course, many other options, from solar, to biofuels, to geothermal energy production, that are beyond the scope of this article to discuss. Instead, the paper will turn to tools from international law that, by taking long-term sustainability seriously, could serve to guide the development of energy strategy in the Great Lakes region.

**Designing an Energy Strategy**

Before turning to principles of international law that could be drawn upon to inform the design of a Great Lakes regional energy strategy, it is important to briefly consider what might be meant by such a strategy. Curiously, despite Canada producing a diversity of sources of energy, Canada does not currently have a National Energy Strategy, although the push to develop one is increasing.58 This is less surprising however when account is taken of the numerous competing energy interests that exist across the country. A reality of energy production to date has been that some communities benefit, while others suffer loss, including loss of land, culture, livelihoods and health.59 Moreover, the conflict surrounding energy production goes beyond just the community level as each province has different energy needs and interests, and will fight against other provinces to ensure that policy decisions are made in their favour.60 This makes any kind of coherent energy policy a great challenge, with energy strategies instead tending to reflect the views of particular interests.61 However, the challenge of creating a coherent strategy may not be rooted in the differences of opinion, but rather the approach used to address the differences.

Joseph Arvai has recently characterized energy strategy as “a long-term adaptive framework for guiding decisions about energy development and delivery.”62 He describes this as “a deliberative process that encourages

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59 Scott, supra note 28, at 83.

60 Macdonald & Leach, supra note 25, at 2.

61 Bruce Pardy, *Energy Visions versus Private Rights: Government Energy Strategies Game the System*, 25 J. ENVTL. L. & PRAC. 69 at 75 (2013): “Government energy visions and strategies are inconsistent with neutral, abstract rules and principles because they prescribe ends. A vision of Canada as an oil-exporting energy superpower champions oil exploration, development, production and sale. The purpose of such visions, ultimately, is to shuffle the legal deck to favour particular interests and facilitate the achievement of those outcomes.”

involvement from all key stakeholders and gives each a legitimate role in
addressing the tradeoffs that are key to the decisions at hand.”

Essentially, an energy strategy should be a process-oriented strategy focused on engaging
stakeholders, and making decisions based on evolving and current views. While
Arvai proposes this approach in the context of development of a Canadian
energy strategy, it is equally applicable in the context of the Great Lakes region
where a lack of coherent energy strategy is clearly evident. And indeed, the
idea of stakeholder input as essential to strategy is not a new one. It is an idea
that is integral to environmental management, where it is no longer accepted that
an environmental technician working in isolation can exercise professional
judgment on behalf of the public. This consensus is reflected, as we shall see,
in fundamental principles of international environmental law. The significance of
participatory rights in environmental decision-making highlights the
interconnection between environment and human rights, an area increasingly on
the international agenda, and with implications for business engagement in
energy and resource development.

International Environmental and Human Rights Law

The history of international environmental law is intertwined with that of
Canada-United States relations, with the Trail Smelter arbitration from the 1930s
serving as the oft-cited origin of the foundational “do no harm” principle.
Clearly then it is accepted at least in principle that states have an obligation to
erase due diligence to prevent transboundary environmental harm, whether air
or water pollution, as well as an obligation to prevent harm to the global common
areas and common concerns. This understanding is codified in Principle 2 of
the 1992 Rio Declaration, all 27 Principles of which were re-endorsed by states
in the 2012 Rio+20 outcome document The Future We Want. Among the
Principles of particular interest to development of a regional energy strategy are
those that emphasize the importance of participatory rights in environmental
decision-making. Thus Principle 10 states:


63 Id.
64 See, e.g., Jacob Wheeler, No Clear Path for Energy Policy in Great Lakes States
(August 20, 2012), http://www.circleofblue.org/waternews/2012/world/no-clear-path-for-
energy-policy-in-great-lakes-states/
65 See, e.g., R. Edward Freeman, STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT – A STAKEHOLDER APPROACH
(1984); Steve Selin & Deborah Chavez, Developing a Collaborative Model for Environmental
66 See generally TRANSBOUNDARY HARM IN INTERNATIONAL LAW: LESSONS FROM THE TRAIL
SMELTER ARBITRATION (Rebecca M. Bratspies & Russell A. Miller eds., 2006).
67 See generally Günther Handl, Transboundary Impacts and Jutta Brunnée, Common
Areas, Common Heritage, and Common Concern in Daniel Bodansky et al., The OXFORD
HANDBOOK OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW 531-49, 550-73 (2007); John H. Knox,
[hereinafter Rio Declaration].
Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.

While Principle 22 states:

Indigenous people and their communities and other local communities have a vital role in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.

Principle 10 is often described as an enunciation of the three pillars of public participation rights: access to information, participation in decision-making, and access to justice. These pillars may be found in numerous instruments, with one of the most progressive articulations in the Aarhus Convention recognizing that sovereign borders should not stop the flow of information or preclude rights of transboundary participation. In the days leading up to Rio +20, there was a movement to reinforce Principle 10, indeed, to place it at the heart of Rio +20. Meanwhile, the rights of indigenous peoples have been elevated through the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In addition to participatory environmental rights, substantive environmental human rights have increasingly been recognized within international law and domestic constitutions. The recent appointment of Professor John Knox by the UN Human Rights Council as the Independent Expert on Human Rights and the Environment could be an important step towards further recognition and protection of these rights.

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Environment is a sign of this trend, although the issue was on the table at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in its earlier work on export of hazardous wastes. More recently, there is a movement to articulate climate harms as human rights violations, an issue with clear implications for the conceptualization of an energy strategy. Recognition in 2010 of a human right to clean water and sanitation is also of relevance to deliberations over energy strategy in the Great Lakes region.

Other principles of international environmental law that should inform the development of an energy strategy include the precautionary principle or approach, the principle sustainable development, the principle of intra-generational equity, and the polluter pays principle. Importantly, the principle of intergenerational equity, also known as the future generations principle, draws attention to the obligation of decision-makers today to pass the planet on to future generations in no worse if not a better condition than current generations enjoy today.

While principles of international law are generally viewed as applicable only to states, increasingly international law is understood as having evolved to recognize a role for sub-national actors like provinces and states and non-state actors more generally. Thus, reference to international law principles in the development of a regional Great Lakes energy strategy would be in keeping with

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80 Principle 6, Rio Declaration, supra note 68; Dinah Shelton, Equity, in Daniel Bodansky et al., THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW 642-43 (2007).
81 Principle 16, Rio Declaration, supra note 68.
the evolving nature of international law itself. Moreover, endorsement in 2011 of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights has illuminated society’s expectation that businesses, despite being non-state actors, should also respect human rights. According to the Guiding Principles, all businesses should adopt human rights policies, engage in human rights due diligence to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights consequences, and provide for remedy in the event of harm. The importance of local community human rights in natural resource exploitation has been long recognized, where consequences clearly flow from a company’s loss of its social license to operate.

To the extent that energy companies participate in the development of a Great Lakes regional energy strategy, it would equally be in keeping with the evolution of international law for these companies to acknowledge the importance of these environmental human rights considerations in energy choices.

CONCLUSIONS

In practice, what might be the implications of considering international environmental and human rights law principles in the development of a regional Great Lakes energy strategy in the Anthropocene? Foremost, these principles remind us that the development of any strategy must be an inclusive participatory process that transcends the limitations of state borders. The contemporary political borders between Canada and the United States, and those that divide provinces and states from each other are “relatively recent creations.” Indeed, “prior to contact (ca. 1534) [the Great Lakes region] was home to hundreds of thousands of Aboriginal Nations living both in direct proximity to the lakes and their watershed or regularly making seasonal use of the region.” Ensuring participation from all within the region may not be enough, however, to take seriously a shared responsibility as stewards of a globally significant fresh water resource at a time of increasing water scarcity associated with climate change. Beyond ensuring participation of divergent voices within the Great Lakes region, an enlightened process would embrace views from beyond the Great Lakes region. This would recognize the global significance of the Great Lakes, as well as the global implications of energy choices that, by degrading our “global atmospheric trust”, will exacerbate climate harms in regions of the world less

85 Principle 15, Guiding Principles, id.
88 Id at xiv.
Creating space for local and global voices will bring in diverse and seemingly irreconcilable points of view, yet is crucial to environmental discourse and a participatory approach to the development of an energy strategy. Critically, it must be accepted that the competitive advantage of businesses in region is not compromised by fully integrating environmental & social concerns in energy strategy. In fact, the long-term well-being of the Great Lakes region, including its local business, depends on this. But recognizing this imperative is no easy task, as shared understandings of the importance of long-term sustainability, and the perhaps more elusive need for resilience thinking in the face of climate change, are not yet evident. If these understandings are to develop, it will be through inclusive and multi-stakeholder processes that facilitate participation by those with the courage to voice concerns that reflect both local and global ecological consciousness.
