



PADDLE CANADA
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via Email

RE: Proposed changes to the Navigable Waterways Protection Act (NWPA)

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities,

On behalf of the Paddle Canada Board of Directors, I am writing to express our concern for the future of our Canadian Heritage Navigation Rights when travelling our Canadian waterways by canoe, sea kayak, river kayak and other small watercraft.

The Paddle Canada Board of Directors was, in fact, extremely disappointed by the recent actions of Mr Ricard, Committee Clerk. While Paddle Canada would have been greatly appreciative of the opportunity to be given a voice on this issue, we regret that the timelines as provided by Mr Ricard for this matter were utterly unrealistic.

Like many non-for-profit associations dedicated to the preservation of Canada's Heritage waterways the Paddle Canada Board of Directors is comprised of volunteers from across the country - from Newfoundland through to British Columbia and Nunavut. The Board represents Canadian paddlers from Coast to Coast; the act of providing less than 48 hours notice (and by email no less) is insufficient for us to communicate the intent of your actions to our membership and to allow them to develop an informed and unified stance. Many paddlers are extremely upset to learn that the hearings concerning the removal of their rights from the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA) are already concluded.

The frustration expressed by most is that the proposed changes to the NWPA are premature and faulty because of the lack of public consultation!

Paddle Canada truly believes that having public input is key to strengthening the protection of the future of our waterways, an important part of our environmental and heritage pillars. Our navigable waterways are magnificent treasures that should be managed with the public's input and we would encourage your to listen to the other views of our people in our great land of water too.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to not recommend the elimination of Navigation Rights for small watercraft because we believe that the right to be able to trigger an Environmental Assessment if we, the public, want one should be granted. This would ensure that all environmental, social and economic concerns are addressed before development can occur in sensitive waterway areas.

We would also like you to consider the ramifications of allowing this proposed precedent setting elimination of our rights and the message it seems to be saying: that most of our waterways could be open for development if the NWPA is rewritten to exclude the Navigation Rights for small water craft. And I assure you that this is a message that the majority of Canadians will not be pleased to hear.

Sincerely,



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