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August 12, 2019

File: 5220-20
Abandoned Boats – Assessment & Removal Grant
0400-20
Correspondence/Meetings/General

The Honourable Marc Garneau
Minister of Transport
4060 Sainte-Catherine Street West (Main Office)
Suite 340 Westmount, Quebec H3Z 2Z3
Via email: marc.garneau@parl.gc.ca

Dear Minister Garneau:

RE: REQUESTED AMENDMENT TO TRANSPORT CANADA'S ABANDONED BOAT PROGRAM

On behalf of the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board, I am writing to request the federal government amend Transport Canada's Abandoned Boat Program (ABP) to provide sufficient funding required for removal and disposal of abandoned boats.

Abandoned boats have long been an issue in coastal waterways, harbours and bays for southern Vancouver Island communities. They present navigation hazards, environmental risks from contamination and habitat destruction, and impact the aesthetic and recreational enjoyment of our regional waters. The CRD and other coastal communities advocated to provincial and federal governments through both the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for clear action and funding to effectively manage abandoned and derelict boats, which are under the jurisdiction of higher levels of government.

The federal government responded in 2016 with funding provided through the Abandoned Boat Program. The CRD Board contributes 25% funding for removal and disposal of abandoned boats, as required by the program, and our staff actively work with the Dead Boats Disposal Society (DBDS) to inventory, assess, remove and dispose of abandoned boats in our region.

To date, the CRD has contributed \$268,000 in funds for the removal of 40 abandoned boats and anticipates that \$150,000-\$200,000 more will be required in the coming year to remove another 30-35 that have been identified in the region.

This is in addition to significant staff time and expenses incurred by the CRD and DBDS to conduct inventories, attempts to find and notify boat owners and file the appropriate documentation to obtain Transport Canada authority to remove the boats – all of which are required activities to submit funding applications through the Abandoned Boat Program. This is a substantial investment made by the regional government to resolve an issue that falls outside of our jurisdiction.

We appreciate that Transport Canada has made efforts to streamline the current process so it is easier for local entities to access funds in a timely manner. As well, we strongly support the recent passage of Bill C-64, The *Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act*, which will prohibit vessel abandonment and improve vessel owner identification, responsibility and liability. However, we are concerned there will be an increase in boat abandonment as Bill C-64 comes into force and we ask the federal government to make further improvements to the Abandoned Boat Program by providing 100% of eligible costs for removal and disposal of abandoned boats in order to continue this important work.

If your staff have any questions, please contact Glenn Harris, Senior Manager, Environmental Protection Division (gharris@crd.bc.ca; 250-360-3090). Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colin Plant', is positioned above the typed name.

Colin Plant
Chair
Capital Regional District Board

cc: CRD Board Member
Robert Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD
Larisa Hutcheson, General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services, CRD
Sheila Malcolmson, Member of the Legislative Assembly