

April 26, 2022

Transport Canada
Let's Talk Transportation
Government of Canada

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

Re: Let's Talk Small Vessels Noise Emissions

The Muskoka Lakes Association (MLA) would like our voice to be heard with respect to the Let's Talk open consultation on small vessel noise emissions.

The MLA represents over 11,500 people who are lakefront property owners and users in the District of Muskoka. Our mission is to promote the responsible use, enjoyment and conservation of the unique Muskoka environment. Our activities are extensive ranging from water quality testing to advocating for responsible government, fair taxation and responsible land use policies. The MLA is Canada's oldest lake association and has been active in the region since 1894.

For many years our lakes and rivers have been plagued by excessively noisy boats. This problem has grown in recent decades as larger and more powerful high performance boats have been introduced to the marketplace without effective noise abatement systems, or with systems that are being modified by owners. The problem is further exacerbated by the weak and virtually unenforceable muffler regulations in the Small Vessel SOR/2010-91. We believe the problem is caused by a small minority of boat operators and manufacturers.

In our membership survey conducted in May 2021, 77% of respondents identified the 'quiet' as something they value about Muskoka. In addition, 74% of respondents identified an 'increase in boat noise' as something they worry about for the future of Muskoka. In our membership survey conducted in 2019, 63% of respondents indicated that 'noisy boats' was impacting their use and enjoyment of their properties.

The MLA strongly supports Let's Talk Option # 5 - "Introduce performance standards for manufacturers and vessel operators to follow". This option will cover both existing and future boats. However, it is important that new regulations include procedures that are both easy for enforcement agencies to use and are defensible in court.

Performance standards for boat motor noise, set in decibels, will be clear and easy to understand by all stakeholders much the same as blood alcohol limits and speed limits on highways are for drivers. Decibel limits will bring Canada in line with many USA states and the EU.

We would like to thank Transport Canada for bringing this to the public consultation stage of regulatory change. We encourage you to move this relatively straightforward amendment through the process as quickly as possible to make our lakes more enjoyable for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Martin-Downs". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Deborah Martin-Downs
President