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**From:** "Murray and Karen Hunt" <mkhunt@ripnet.com>  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 04, 2009 11:31 PM  
**To:** "Karen Hunt" <mkhunt@ripnet.com>  
**Subject:** Navigatable Waterways Protection Act  
To : Lake Networking Group email distribution list

From: Karen Hunt

Hello everyone,

I am forwarding for your information the two notes below. The first was forwarded to me by Pete Stothart from Crosby Lake this morning and the second is information on the same topic that I received through the Rideau Valley Field Naturalists this afternoon. The links in the second message will provide yet more information. Some of you may already be well informed about this topic but for those who have not yet been made aware of this situation, I hope that the information below is helpful.

I can put this topic for discussion at the next Lake Networking Group Meeting (March 26)

Regards,

Karen

#### NAVIGABLE WATERWAYS CRISIS

Government's Budget Implementation Act Erases the Public Right of Navigation in Canada  
On Friday February 6, 2009, the federal Conservative government introduced its Budget Implementation Act (BI Act). This Act is an omnibus bill that introduces a series of sweeping legislation changes, including amendments to the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA). The proposed amendments to the NWPA will permanently erase the public right of navigation in Canada and will have serious consequences for the environmental health of Canadian waterways. Under the proposed new NWPA, waterways in Canada will only be considered navigable under the sole discretion of the Minister of Transport. The proposed new NWPA also gives the Minister of Transport sole discretion to determine whether or not any proposed project ("work") on a Canadian waterway will have an impact on navigation. The proposed new NWPA grants the Minister of Transport the authority to change, at any time, the criteria used to assess whether a waterway is navigable, or whether a work or type of work may interfere with navigation. The four named works (bridges, booms, dams, and causeways), added to the NWPA in 1883 because these structures, by their very nature, interfere with navigation...have been removed. The government has introduced these changes to the NWPA without consulting with:

- First Nations
- Paddling organizations
- The outdoor tourism industry
- Cottage associations
- River advocacy groups
- Anglers and hunters
- Anyone who uses Canadian waterways for business or recreation.

The Position of the Canadian Rivers Network (a non-profit, advocacy group) and Black Feather, is:

- the NWPA would benefit from a comprehensive review and amendments to modernize and streamline administrative processes
- this government does not have a mandate to erase the public right of navigation

in Canada

- these changes to the NWPA will diminish free access to our natural environment for all Canadians

- these changes to the NWPA will damage Canadian waters

- the government is acting irresponsibly and radically

- the government is not acting in the best interest of Canadians

Canada was discovered, explored and developed through the navigation of our waterways.

The public right of navigation a fundamental part of what it means to be Canadian. The Government of Canada, under the pretext of helping the economy, is erasing our right, our history, our heritage.

There is something you can do.

1) Inform yourself and others: Copy and paste this message into an email or a facebook message to your friends and encourage them to take action. We can be effective by working together. Every letter, every phone call, and every email will help.

2) Tell the government you care about Canada's waterways and that you do not support the proposed amendments to the NWPA or the elimination of the public right of navigation in Canada. Send an email to the people listed below and express your concerns about the use of the Budget Implementation Act to make sweeping changes to legislation that is intended to protect Canadian waters and the rights of Canadian citizens. Insist that no changes to the NWPA be made before a full and comprehensive public consultation process occurs.

Email:

National Manager, Navigable Waters Protection Program, David Osbaldeston: [OSBALDD@tc.gc.ca](mailto:OSBALDD@tc.gc.ca)

Minister of Transportation, John Baird:

[bairdj@parl.gc.ca](mailto:bairdj@parl.gc.ca)

Minister of Environment, Jim Prentice:

[Prentice.J@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Prentice.J@parl.gc.ca)

Opposition transportation critics:

[Volpej@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Volpej@parl.gc.ca)

[Bevington.D@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Bevington.D@parl.gc.ca)

[lafram0@parl.gc.ca](mailto:lafram0@parl.gc.ca)

[will.munsey@greenparty.ca](mailto:will.munsey@greenparty.ca)

Opposition environment critics:

[McGuintyD@parl.gc.ca](mailto:McGuintyD@parl.gc.ca)

[Duncan.L@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Duncan.L@parl.gc.ca)

[bigrab@parl.gc.ca](mailto:bigrab@parl.gc.ca)

[petergraham@greenparty.ca](mailto:petergraham@greenparty.ca)

Opposition water critics:

[scarpf@parl.gc.ca](mailto:scarpf@parl.gc.ca)

[Hyer.B@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Hyer.B@parl.gc.ca),

And don't forget your own MP. You can find your MP through this link:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/>

[MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Language=E](http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Language=E)

Check out this [MEMORANDUM](#) from the U. of Ottawa Environmental Law Clinic.

**Subject:** MVFN NEWS RE: Navigable Waters Protection Act

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROPOSES ELIMINATION OF

## NAVIGABLE WATERS PROTECTION ACT

COEO Membership Secretary sends us the following message from Becky Mason, daughter of Bill Mason and paddler extraordinaire in her own right. Please respond to this request.

The federal government is saying they are about to eliminate the Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA). Not only will this affect our right to recreational travel on Canadian waterways but it also has the potential to reverse the effectiveness of the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act. For more info on the NWPA, go to: <http://www.ispeakforcanadianrivers.ca> Letters need to be sent in now because the timing of the government's announcements in the media in mid January was not coincidental. The Federal Government is meeting with municipalities and with the provinces to sell them this idea of gutting the NWPA under the pretext of saving the economy. If all levels of government unwittingly jump on board it will be very difficult to rally opposition to it. Most Canadians will be affected by the elimination of the NWPA and this is the federal government's response to requests that more consultation should be held: "no time for public consultation because rescuing the economy is so important."

We need to talk and write to our politicians: municipal, provincial and federal and strongly urge them to resist what the Harper government is pushing in terms of gutting environmental legislation under the guise of rescuing the economy. I have a well organized website and I suggest you go there to write your letter because all the current contact and information about this is there. Please go to: <http://www.redcanoes.ca/becky/canoe/environmental.html>

PS It is apparent that we need to act quickly and with as many voices as possible. This proposed move is indeed a part of Bill C-10, the federal government's Budget Implementation Act, currently before Parliament.