

February 25, 2013

VIA EMAIL

The Honourable Peter Kent, P.C., M.P.
Minister of the Environment
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H3

Dear Minister:

Re: Trent-Severn and Rideau Waterways

Regional Tourism Organization 7 is writing on behalf of RTOs 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, who represent the Ontario tourism regions that depend upon these waterways as significant economic, heritage, and recreational assets. We have been monitoring with increasing concern the ongoing uncertainty as to the future operating schedules of the Trent-Severn and Rideau Waterways.

We are appreciative of the work that has been undertaken by Parks Canada to make our waterways iconic tourism assets that attract untold thousands of visitors each year. Parks Canada's attention to canal infrastructure and customer service has helped make these waterways unique marine and heritage experiences enjoyed by Ontario tourists from far and wide.

We are alarmed by the possibility that the Government of Canada would consider cost-cutting measures without first considering the devastating implications for the communities, tourism operators and other businesses who depend upon these waterways. Simply put, the impact would be both immediate and devastating. It is clear to us that a long-term solution is needed. Notwithstanding the recent announcement concerning the 2013 season, the prevailing uncertainty – which had a notable impact on 2012 travel and trade – will only serve to jeopardize the efficacy of any potential permanent solutions. While we are sensitive to the Government's fiscal challenges, trading short-term gain in the form of cost cuts for long-term economic pain is a poor strategy.

In our opinion a concerted and coordinated effort to investigate and evaluate strategic options is necessary. The spirit of collaboration that was embodied in the federal-provincial MOU that was signed in 2011 regarding the Trent-Severn Waterway suggests there was and is a willingness to work together. Ontario's RTOs are ready, willing and able to come to the table to help reinvigorate and protect the waterways as important economic drivers, and for the continued enjoyment of all.

We therefore respectfully call upon you to:

- Bring Parks Canada, involved agencies and government organizations, the private sector and other key stakeholders together to develop a strategy to provide for sustainable operation of the waterways into the future; and
- Extend the moratorium on reductions to operating schedules until such time as this planning process is complete.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to being involved in future dialogue and working with all levels of government and their agencies to preserve the future of the Trent-Severn and Rideau Waterways.

Yours sincerely,

REGIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION 7 / per



Paul G. Crysler
Chair

ON BEHALF OF:

John Platz
Chair, Regional Tourism Organization 6
The Central Counties

Michael Crockatt
Chair, Regional Tourism Organization 10
Ottawa and Countryside

Joe Corrigan
Chair, Regional Tourism Organization 8
Our Favourite Place

Laurel Smith
Chair, Regional Tourism Organization 11
Ontario's Highlands Tourism Organization

Stephen Paul
Chair, Regional Tourism Organization 9
The Great Waterway

Gary Froude
Chair, Regional Tourism Organization 12
Explorers' Edge

Copy to: Alan Latourelle CEO, Parks Canada
 Hon. Michael Chan Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport
 Hon. David Oraziatti Minister of Natural Resources

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