



Rideau Lakes

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September 3, 2025

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Canadian Culture and Identity, Parks Canada
15 Eddy Street
Gatineau, Quebec
J8X 4B3

Dear Minister Guilbeault,

On behalf of the Township of Rideau Lakes, and at the request of our local Lake Associations, I am writing to urge you and your Government to re-table in Parliament, the draft “*Historic Places of Canada Act*” (originally Bill C-23 introduced in 2022), specifically **sections 33-34** which will allow the Parks Canada Agency to write their own regulations for their historic canals and improve their ability to enforce those regulations.

As you know, the Rideau Canal stretches 202 km from Ottawa to Kingston. The section traversing the Township of Rideau Lakes is 65 km long. It consists of a series of lakes connected by locks with a over 320 km of shoreline (not including islands) within the Township. These waterfront areas - like those of many other Ontario rural municipalities – are experiencing very significant development pressures. Many waterfront properties are being converted to full-time housing, and previously undeveloped lots are receiving new homes.

At the same time, we understand that the ability of Parks Canada – which has sole responsibility for regulating “in water” Canal works (such as docks, boat houses, and the like) -- to set and enforce its own Regulations, remains severely outdated. Indeed, legislative authority remains within the Transport Canada portfolio, a vestige of the transfer of responsibility to Parks Canada in 1972. Practically speaking, the fines for undocumented docks, etc., remain very low by modern standards. Low fines likely do not serve as a real deterrent to excessive in water development, development which, over time, poses environmental risks to local ecosystems, and to the historic nature of the Canal itself. For example, the fine associated with a structure erected in or over the Canal without a permit is \$100. The fine for in-water works such as “filling” and “dredging” without a permit is only \$275 -- scarcely a meaningful deterrent in 2025! (For further information, please see the following link to Parks Canada regulations: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-96-313/page-7.html>)

Fortunately, the urgent need to update the legal foundations for Parks Canada to establish – and enforce – its own regulations for the health of the Rideau (and other) Canal(s) has already been recognized by yourself and by Parks Canada staff in the original Bill C-23, the “*Historic Places*

of Canada Act”, which was tabled in 2022, but died on Order Paper when Parliament was dissolved this past March.

We recognize that Parliament faces many competing priorities. The provisions in “Bill 23” that would have allowed Parks Canada to meet its responsibilities for the health of the Rideau Canal, given the developmental and environmental challenges of 2025, were most welcome, and long-overdue.

We respectfully ask, therefore, that your government re-table the key provisions of this legislation at the earliest opportunity in the new session of Parliament. Doing so would be a clear commitment to the health of the Rideau Canal, and to the vital roles played by Parks Canada and its staff.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mayor Arie Hoogenboom
Township of Rideau Lakes

c.c.:

Mr. Michael Barrett, MP

Steve Clark, MPP

Parks Canada: Mr. Ron Hallman (CEO) and David Britton (Director Ontario Waterways)