

BRIEF

April 17/03

The Ministère de l'Environnement  
Monsieur Andre Boisclair  
Edifice Marie-Guyart, 30ieme etage  
675 Boui. Rene-Levesque Est.  
Quebec G1r5V7

from: N. Henshaw

180 P  NP  DM-1  
Dragage d'entretien du chenal entre  
Hudson et Oka  
Lac des Deux-Montagnes 6211-02-104

Dear Minister: Re: Project No.50-5473-9801

I am a resident of Hudson. I was born here in this town in 1931, and have resided here more or less ever since. I live on the Main Road, 1/2 mile west of the ferry. I am very much affected by the inordinate amount of traffic on this little narrow winding dangerous country road, with no side-walks, which is prohibitive to its use for pedestrians and bicycles and causing a lot of noise and discomfort.

I would like to point out that the primary reasons for the ferry between Hudson and Oka do no longer exist. It was started up when the railway came through Como (now Hudson), for the mail and passengers. There was no highway at that time either, to Montreal on that side of the river. Also as a means of transportation across the river for Indian day-workers as gardeners, though they could easily come in their own boats.. These reasons, of course, no longer exist. The idea that there is a "cultural and tourism heritage closely tied to the economic history of the two municipalities" is plain nonsense. There are virtually NO cultural or economic ties. Quite the contrary in fact. The ferry now seems to serve as a link between major highways on both sides of the river. As there also exist links to these major routes by road and bridges and by an alternate ferry at Point Fortune, the ferry here should be closed. I therefore wish to question the desirability of dredging to be done to keep the ferry operable between Oka and Hudson.

In the report from Genivar, there are reasons stated as arguments for the continued presence of the ferry. I refute all of these reasons as stated, and claim that they were submitted without proper research.

Under Paragraph 3 in the report, the justifications are untrue and inappropriate. The "worker transportation", the time "saved", the desirability of a "tourist attraction", the "economic spinoffs for waterfront municipalities", are all misrepresented. There are no "workers" going in between the two municipalities. The "time saved" is grossly exaggerated. There are no economic spinoffs for waterfront municipalities. Quite the reverse actually, when considering real estate values going down because of disruptions from the ferry. In actual fact, the following facts are true and experienced by us local residents who live near the ferry on the main road.

1} The noise and disruption of the traffic from the ferry on our inadequate country roads should be considered. There are many families living on Sanderson Road, right opposite the ferry terminal in Hudson, and also on Belleview Road which most of the traffic uses to get access to Hwy 342, and then onto the No 40 autoroute. In the summer, a very large number of motorcycles use the ferry on their aimless pleasure rounds, often stopping for

refreshment in Hudson. There seems to be no restriction on the amount of decibels these motorcycles are allowed to make, and all summer long, the residents on this little road are virtually tortured by the roar of these monstrous bikes, not to mention the danger to pedestrians and bicycles of the local residents along the road. There is no sidewalk or even a foot-path for locals to escape this through-traffic, which is usually travelling at excess speed.

- 2) The disruption caused by the ferry to the natural environment is also to be considered. I am not familiar with the fauna of the area, but it must be obvious that dredging of the magnitude described in the Genivar Report will be devastating to the natural habitants of the area outlined. This is a serious consideration, especially as the ferry is not really a needed service for local use.
- 3) If it is being considered, that the ferry is eventually going to expand its operations, it must be stopped. It is barely tolerable now, and any increase will require all sorts of new installations including access roads to the major highways. Our residential peace in this area will be totally destroyed. Our real-estate values will be deflated. Our properties will be only of use in a commercial sense, so re-zoning will have to be considered.

At the end of Paragraph 3.1 , it is stated that ferry users will have to travel via routes 344, 342, and 201, as though these are poor alternatives. This statement is misleading. Of course, traffic density will increase elsewhere if the ferry not longer goes through Hudson, but our roads will benefit from this decrease in density, and since they are inadequate for this through traffic, it is very much a sought-after happening. The alternate routes will include Hgh. 13, an autoroute, designed to carry heavy traffic unlike our local roads. This route is not even mentioned in the report.

The report says that the ferry saves users 60 to 80 minutes in transit time. Wrong. The trip by either Hgh.13, or by the Carrillon ferry takes less than 60 minutes. The ferry takes between 20 and 30 minutes. The "saving is therefore between 30 and 40 minutes, if one gets on upon arrival at the dock...otherwise it takes longer. There are often long waits. As most ferry users are not going in between the two towns, but have other starting points and destinations, their time is probably not affected at all by taking alternate routes..

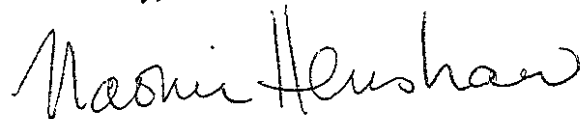
Pragraph 3.2 points out other "disadvantages" of not keeping the ferry going. One is that there will be a reduction of tourists to the "region". What region are we referring to?. We are not a "tourist" destination, and if we were to become one, I think we should be entitled to a great deal of thought in the "re-zoning" department to take advantage of this new description. Hudson is essentially a bedroom-community, and I do not think would wish to revise this image and way of life. In fact, there are many more advantages to this town to close the ferry than to keep it open. The tourist description could actually by ascribed to the river, which is now widely used as recreation, and for which use the ferry is actually detrimental and even presents hazards.

It was revealed, at the meeting in Hudson on April 15, that there had in fact, been a request for the dredging to be done in accordance with the use of bigger boats. This was not mentioned in the report, yet the amount of dredging described seems to be as specified for the larger boats. It was stated at the meeting, that the only specifications available are for larger operations! What nonsense is that? Also, it was revealed that the additional costs for this larger dredging plan than is needed for the present operation, are substantial indeed! More than double, in fact. It is obvious, that this shallow bay, on the Hudson side of the river is not a good place for a large ferry-boat landing. The fact that it is surrounded by a residential area that provides no suitable roads and infrastructure for handling a hugely increased amount of traffic does not help either.

It was mentioned in the report several times, that unless this dredging operation, in the magnitude described, is accomplished forthwith, the ferry would cease to operate. I consider this an idle threat. Why the ferry cannot continue just as it is is not explained. The report suggests that the ferry is as it is now, is a tourist attraction because of its "antiquity" and "cultural heritage". Is the Dept. of Highways interested in preserving "tourist attractions" and "cultural heritage" operations for modern transportation means? Obviously not, otherwise they would preserve a greater train service, which is the same vintage as the ferry, and of much use locally. They would presumably also keep the old steam engines. However, if it is in fact true, that the ferry will close, than I think the Town of Hudson, and probably Oka too, should seek that option rather than entertain the idea of a large-scale operation with all the problems that would arise from it, and which, by the way, would no longer serve as a so-called "cultural heritage tourist attraction"..

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my reasons for re-considering the project. They are based upon 1) The inappropriateness of the sites due to the shallowness of the Baie in question, and to the presence of a residential area surrounding the landing on the Hudson side leading to the highways that are the usual destinations of the travellers. 2) The amount and frequency and expense of the dredging requirements. 3) The nearness and more suitability of alternate routes across the River for through traffic. 4) The lack of local use of the facility. 5) The inadequacy of the local infrastructure to handle the ferry traffic that is not local. 6) The possibility of expansion and resulting disastrous consequences to our community.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Naomi Henshaw". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Naomi Henshaw