

**PROPOSED MAINTENANCE DREDGING OF THE CHANNEL BETWEEN
HUDSON AND OKA IN LAC DES DEUX MONTAGNES.**

Brief Submitted by: Sandra Miron

As a resident of St-Lazare and a frequent user of the ferry service between Hudson and Oka I am submitting this brief in favour of the proposed maintenance dredging of the channel between Hudson and Oka.

My interest in this project lies in the fact that my husband uses the ferry daily to get to work and that I too am a frequent user. I feel that the proposed channel dredging is needed for the following reasons: In order to maintain the ferry service; to make the crossings and docking procedures safer for employees and passengers alike; and for environmental reasons.

La Traverse d'Oka provides an essential service for many of its clients who use this service as part of their daily commute. This service shortens driving time, provides a safe and stress-free alternative to using the over congested highways, and reduces the risk of highway accidents for those motorists who choose to use the ferry. We are all well aware of the fact that an accident that occurs on the Iles aux Tourtes bridge can cause traffic to back up to the Ontario border. The accidents that occur on both highway 40 and highway 20 are often caused by excessive speed, stressed out road-rage prone drivers and the increase in the number of cars and trucks using these roadways. By using the ferry service, clients can avoid these problems and instead of spending hours in traffic get to spend 15 minutes on the ferry relaxing for part of their daily commute making for calmer drivers once they disembark. The channel needs to be dredged so that this ferry service can continue.

The proposed dredging of the channel is needed to ensure the safety of ferry passengers and the employees aboard the boats. La Traverse d'Oka employs highly experienced boat pilots. From what has been said in these meetings even these experienced pilots are having difficulty with the docking process due to the increased silt build-up in the channel. If the channel is not dredged, there will be an increased risk to the lives of both passengers and crew, therefore the safety of passengers and crew aboard these vessels should be of primary concern in these hearings.

Today, environmentally minded people are concerned about our depleted ozone layer and governments are insisting on the reduction of the greenhouse gasses emitted by burning fossil fuels. Ferry use leads to the reduction of these emissions. Using the ferry daily for a return trip cuts emissions by approximately 2 hours per car. If one multiplies this by 10, (the number of cars on the ferry during rush-hour) and then multiplies that result by the number of ferry boats plying the waterway during one day, it makes for a lot of cars that are not producing harmful emissions for hours on end. Hudson, a town that prides itself for its "progressive environmental policy," should be welcoming an improved ferry service, not obstructing it.

Over the course of the BAPE sessions Hudson residents have expressed concerns about the environmental impact of the dredging project. Environmental specialists have reassured them that the impact of the dredging on the flora and fauna of the region will be minimal. This channel has been dredged in the past yet we can still find turtles, herons, ducks and fish in this area. The specialists have reassured us that they will return, the fish stocks will be replenished and Mother Nature will see to the rest.. If we look at the scenario where dredging is not done, the accumulation of silt in this area may cause more harm than good to both flora and fauna. More silt accumulation will also lead to unpleasant odours intensifying and the inability of people to be able to walk along the shore without sinking up to their knees in silt. This has occurred along other stretches of the waterways in this province. Another question here is; just how much of the silt build-up in Lac des Deux Montagnes is the result of the Town of Hudson polluting the river by pouring millions of litres of raw sewage into it annually? The Town of Hudson should perhaps take the time to consider just what kind of impact this has on the environment. Dredging the river will at least remove some of the contaminants that are present in one area of the river.

In conclusion, the dredging process is necessary to ensure navigational safety and maintain continued ferry service between Hudson and Oka. The environmental impact of this dredging project is minimal. I beseech the residents of Hudson to reflect honestly about their position on the environmental issues and to also take into account the safety of passengers and crew aboard the ferry vessels as these proceedings continue.

I would like to take the time to thank the members of the BAPE team for taking the time to listen to my concerns.

Thank you.