

**Project: Oka Ferry Development Project -
Project to Modernize the Wharfs of the Oka Ferry**

We are a group of concerned residents living on the streets of Sanderson and Bellevue, in close proximity to the ferry.

We all agree that we moved to Hudson to enjoy the quiet life of a rural town. Therefore, we are very concerned that the modern updated ferry proposal by Mr. Desjardins will drastically hinder our current peaceful way of life.

After attending the BAPE hearings on March 27th & 28th 2006, it was clear that this ferry service, although nice, is **not** essential. This is very important. We need to ask the question: Why spend taxpayer's money and disrupt an entire neighbourhood for a private enterprise that is not deemed essential? It seems that the needs of one should not outweigh the needs and concerns of many.

During the BAPE hearings, the question of the safety of the current ferry system was continuously brought into question, both by Mr. Desjardins and Transport Canada. It was actually the main reason given for modernizing the ferry. We were shocked, therefore, to see the ferry reopen during the past week. If it is as dangerous to the passengers and workers as Transport Canada and Mr. Desjardins claim, then why was it allowed to reopen this spring? At the last meeting, the representative from Transport Canada was asked to provide a dossier of the incidents that lead him to deem this ferry so unsafe. Has the committee received this dossier from Transport Canada at this time?

We have to ask, why would the government be prepared to risk the public's safety on an enterprise they deem as unsafe? This makes no sense to us. Maybe it is because the current system is not dangerous. As was also stated at the last BAPE meeting, there has been no significant accident or incident on the ferry since it opened close to 100 years ago. Maybe a lovely, quiet neighbourhood will be forever changed because one private enterprise wants to become more profitable. Hudson will not profit as a community from this modernization, and our neighbourhood will not benefit. If anything, traffic will increase, the larger boats and concrete piers will be an eyesore and the future of the neighbourhood will be in question.

Will new roads be created in the long run? Will our neighbours lose their land or their houses to expropriation? When will the extra boats be added? It is our understanding that more boats will need to be added in order to support the increase in volume. With this increase in volume, will our children ever be able to play outside safely? These are questions we do not need to have answered for a service that is not deemed essential to anyone but Mr. Desjardins. The expanded operating hours that are being proposed, from 6AM to Midnight, are excessive and will further disrupt the peace and quiet of the neighbourhood. Many of us have our childrens' bedrooms facing the ferry, having a multitude of cars driving down the street at midnight will be unbearable.

Mr. Desjardins and his family live in our neighbourhood as well and we don't want to necessarily see his business close, but we do want to ensure that our lives and our families' quality of life and safety are not forever changed for the sole reason that he becomes more profitable.

Amongst our concerns is the environment. We would also like to know what will be the short and long term effects on the flora and fauna of the area? Was a similar concrete pier constructed for another ferry service in the past and has there been other studies which examine their effect on the local wildlife? Can the Environment Minister answer this question?

Although it was not answered clearly in the last meeting as to where Mr. Desjardins is receiving the bulk of his funding from for this project, we would have to assume much of it will be from government sources. As taxpayers, we need to ask how the federal and provincial governments can justify spending \$8M to \$10M of our money on this private enterprise? There are so many ways in which this money could be used to benefit the general public in this community. The sewage treatment plant we have been waiting for for over 10 years or the badly needed road repair on streets such as Main and Cote St. Charles, are only two such examples of projects that are more deserving of government attention. In this province, with hospital cutbacks and school closings, do we need to be spending this kind of money on a privately owned ferry service? And if we do, what is in place to inform the rest of the province where their money is going?

In our opinion, the authorization for the modernization of the ferry should not be approved, for the multitude of reasons we have just described. If this project has to go through, one possible alternative is to move it away from it's current location and relocate it to the area of town known as the old marina. This has many advantages. It is a commercial area, with multiple access roads leading out of town. It would also bring a possible commercial benefit the town of Hudson, in the form of increased tourism to the downtown area. There is also ample room to accommodate a large parking facility for automobiles, as well as storage of the actual ferry boats.

That is just one possible alternative, but as we stated, our overriding position is that this modernization project should not be approved. The negatives clearly and overwhelmingly outweigh any positives that may come from this.

Kind Regards,

Ms. Renee Roberts,
Mr. Patrick McMullen
Ms. Line Lauzon
Mr. Norman Fullum
Ms. Tina Grennan
Mr. Christopher Royal