



Tuesday, March 03, 2009

Honourable Denise Savoie, MP
NDP - Victoria Constituency Office
970 Blanshard St.
Victoria, BC, V8W 2H3

Re: Victoria International Marina Project

Dear Ms. Savoie,

Thank you for hosting the town hall meeting on February 17, 2009, to get input from the public on the Victoria International Marina Project (Hence referred to as "the project"). Unfortunately, we were not able to attend, but I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our organization and provide our input on the project.

GO Rowing & Paddling Association of Canada (GO), is a not-profit Canadian Athletic Association and Registered Charity dedicated to sharing the benefits of sport with Canadians of all ages and athletic abilities. Since December 23rd, 1996 (incorporation date), we have concentrated on rowing & paddling sports, striving to encourage participation, personal challenge and the pursuit of excellence from the grass-roots to the Olympic podium. GO broadens access to sport by offering programs that encourage broad participation, by producing dynamic community based programs and events and by developing new and expanded facilities.

In Victoria, we have operated the **Gorge Rowing and Paddling Centre (GRPC)** at 2940 Jutland Road since 1996. GRPC hosts **hundreds of rowers and paddlers daily** in Rowing, Dragon Boating, Outrigger Canoeing and Kayaking by utilizing the Gorge Waterway and Victoria's Inner, Middle and Outer Harbours. GRPC offers introductory to competitive levels of programming and several participants from the centre have competed and medaled at World Championship and Olympic level events. Throughout our programs, we equally emphasize under-represented groups, such as youth at risk, people with disabilities, breast cancer survivors, and visible minorities.

In early 2008, the marina project leader came to GRPC to get our input and requirements to ensure that non-powered watercraft such as dragon boats, rowing shells, outrigger canoes and ocean kayaks could navigate safely and easily around or through the structure. The proposed development in the Times Colonist on February 14, 2009 completely disregards our input and we are concerned that the marina will severely impede or prevent all human-powered boat traffic to navigate the area. It is our understanding that the proposed plans of the project to allow only 18 feet of water between the edge of the Marina and the Float Plane landing. In our opinion, in case of adverse weather conditions and high volume of traffic, 18 feet is not enough space to navigate and **completely disregards the safety of human-powered boat traffic** – An accident will happen, it is only a matter of when.

The project in its current state will negatively impact our organization's ability to operate and to provide opportunities for citizens and tourists to recreate in human-powered water craft. The Songhees side of the Middle Harbour is the **only available passage** for human-powered water craft to safely transit in and out of the Victoria Inner Harbour. This project will impede and create an unsafe passageway for human-powered watercraft to transit the area.

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The project in its current design does not adequately take into consideration other users' input of the waterway. We ask that if the project moves forward it be altered to reflect the input of the public, ensure there are suitable provisions for human-powered water craft to transit the harbour and suite the needs of the community.

Keeping us informed on developments in this project would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your efforts to ensure the public is informed and included in this issue.

Sincerely,

Scott Parfitt
General Manager

Cc. Victoria – Mayor and Council
Songhees Nation Chiefs
BC New Democrat Party – Esquimalt / Metchosin MLA & Victoria / Hillside MLA
Transport Canada - Victoria Harbour Master
Transport Canada – Minister
Transport Canada – Navigable Waters Protection Officer
Gorge Rowing and Paddling Centre – Management, Staff, Participants, and Stakeholders
Go Rowing and Paddling Association of Canada - President and Board of Directors
Victoria West Community Association
Tourism Victoria