



PCVA

Media Release

Date

For Immediate Release

Ontario Policies Devastate Passenger Vessel Industry

With Ontario starting to open again, the rules being applied to the Passenger Vessel Industry drop the industry between the cracks. “The rules being applied to our operators reflect food and bar service, not tourism, says Kurt Huck, President of the PCVA. “One of our operators who has a Transport Canada rated capacity of 200 passengers is reduced to 3. The most any operator can do now is 10 including a crew of 4-6. All businesses have had a difficult time surviving, but with these policies, it will sink some of us. Many operators took advantage of the \$40,000 federal loan to cover start up costs and are concerned, with that money spent and no revenue to result from it, they won’t survive.

As an industry we have a record of safety and passenger care. We’ve had COVID-19 protocols developed and tailored to our operations. “We are not looking for special treatment, just fair treatment,” said Huck “We have been asking the Minister of Health and the Premier to allow 30% capacity. With borders closed and travel restrictions in place, we are looking to local staycationers who want to start exploring their own communities.”

Economic devastation of our industry will not just affect passenger vessel operators. “The villages of Rockport and Gananoque are resort villages. They rely on tourism and for the community’s survival. Tying in the activity of the Thousand Islands and Kingston area, there is a huge impact”, Huck says. “We employ 400 fulltime staff and 800 part time seasonal, many of whom are students who have been hard hit by the pandemic. We contribute \$60 million in tourism revenue in the Province of Ontario alone.”

We have been asking the Minister of Health to work with Cabinet to approve a reasonable operating capacity for passenger vessels immediately. Transport Canada’s restriction on sailing ends on June 30 with many operators set to open July 1.

The Passenger and Commercial Vessel Association (PCVA) is established to represent the passenger and commercial vessel industry in Canada as a significant and successful contributor to local economies, to promote the general health of the passenger and commercial vessel industry, and to promote and encourage excellence in safety aboard vessels of PCVA members.

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For more information:
Kurt Huck, President
613-223-2774
kurthuck@pcva.ca
www.pcva.ca

Passenger & Commercial Vessel Association
249 Queens Quay West, Unit 110
Toronto ON M5J 2N5
www.pcva.ca