

January 26th, 2022

City of Port Colborne - Provincial Pre-budget Submission
Re: Ontario Marine Transportation Strategy

The Province of Ontario does not have a marine strategy or related funding for cities and towns with ports. Municipalities need to maintain port and harbour infrastructure for safety and security; to support recreational and commercial boating traffic; attract investment and tourism; promote waterfront revitalization; and help facilitate marine industrial growth. However, the capital costs to upgrade port and harbour infrastructure is significant, and smaller Ontario communities such as the City of Port Colborne do not have the financial capacity to fund these improvements on their own.

Competing for limited federal funds with major port cities is challenging. The federal government, through Transport Canada, invests in major city ports including Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. Transport Canada also provides annual funding to the St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corporation to ensure the safe and efficient movement of marine traffic through various locks between Montreal and Lake Erie.

Port Colborne joins other Ontario cities and towns, and key stakeholder groups including the Chamber of Marine Commerce, in recommending that the province create an Ontario Marine Transportation Strategy and establish an Ontario Marine Secretariat to develop a policy and funding framework. This provincial program should mirror the Quebec government's "Maritime Strategy" created in June 2015, with the goal of "ensuring optimal and responsible use of maritime potential in Quebec". This program, which was established with \$3 billion over five (5) years, provides funding for various initiatives "designed to showcase maritime transportation, tourism, and marine resources".

The City of Port Colborne's Mayor has capitalized on opportunities over the past two years to advocate for an Ontario Marine Strategy. Most recently, the City's delegation to the 2021 AMO Conference advocated for this initiative during four separate meetings with the Minister of Transportation; the Minister of Infrastructure; the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; and the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources, Conservation, and Parks.

Economic Development Officers in Niagara have also been discussing this issue at their monthly meetings and Niagara Region has prepared a draft position paper that will form part of the government relations and advocacy strategy.

At their meeting on September 27th 2021, Port Colborne City Council passed a motion supporting a motion passed by St. Catharines' City Council asking the province to create a Marine Strategy and an Ontario Marine Strategy Secretariat. Having a provincial strategy and capital funding would support marine issues important to the City of Port Colborne including port rehabilitation, flood mitigation and shoreline erosion, waterfront redevelopment and the City's cruise ship initiative, and the economic,

tourism, and cultural significance of the City's port as well as the importance of the industrial marine sector. Any marine strategy should also promote more partnerships and integration with rail and road transportation networks as part of a goods movement strategy.

It should also be noted that Great Lakes Cruising has emerged as one of the most popular cruising destinations in the world and Port Colborne is well positioned to capitalize on this. The City of Port Colborne has embarked on a Cruise Ship initiative that will enhance our port waterfront as well as invite private companies to become part of this project with potential marine industry training facilities included. Port Colborne will see 61 cruise ship stops in 2022, compared to 12 stops in previous year.

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