

The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez
Minister of Canadian Heritage
House of Commons
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A Proposal for a National Registry of Historic Canadian Vessels

Dear Minister Rodriguez,

A significant number of countries around the world including the European Union, USA, Australia and most notably the UK (<https://www.nationalhistoricships.org.uk/>) acknowledge the importance of all things maritime to their history and development, by the creation of registries of notable vessels. **Canada, with the largest coastline of any country in the world and a long maritime history, to our embarrassment, has no such registry.**

These registries recognize vessels that have made significant contributions to their national or local histories or which represent a unique aspect of the local boat-building or shipbuilding industries. **They celebrate local maritime accomplishments and history.**

Given this vast country with diverse maritime industries on its four extensive coastlines (Three oceans plus the Great Lakes), **it is important for Canada to fill this significant void in our historical record by creating a National Registry of Historic Canadian Vessels.** The creation of this Registry would represent an important step in the documentation of Canada's maritime history and enable the preservation and restoration of those remaining vessels of historic significance before it is too late. At present the devotees of vessels of distinction must try to find support amongst programs aimed primarily at buildings and similar land-based artifacts.

As a prime example of vessels deserving of such recognition and support, I draw your attention to the ***SS Master*** (www.ssmaster.org) which in 2022 celebrated her centenary. She is, by all records we can identify, the last wooden-hulled, steam-operated tugboat afloat **IN THE WORLD!** That incredible distinction must be celebrated by the restoration of this lovely little ship in recognition of her contribution to the coastal economy of BC in the first phase of her life, and to the education of the general public to the wonders of steam-driven, wooden ships in the second half of her life, under the auspices of the SS Master Society.

The establishment of a **National Registry of Historic Canadian Vessels** would be an important first step in creating more public awareness of the importance of shipbuilding and marine transportation to the economy and the growth of Canada. This could lead to a network of regional maritime centres where historic vessels are celebrated by locals and visitors alike, and where they are cared for and restored by a new generation of young shipwrights trained in the fine art of classic shipbuilding and ship repair. History, training, tourism and jobs...a combination not to be missed!

Minister Rodriguez, please take the earliest possible steps to fill this critical void in the Canadian historical record.

Yours Sincerely,

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