



[Home](#) > [Transport Canada](#)

New legislation protects Canadians' right to navigate on their waters: The *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* takes effect today

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Canadians rely on waterways for travel, transport and pleasure. This includes 19,000 rivers and bays and at least 2,000,000 lakes and unnamed waterways. These waterways helped expand trade and shaped Canada. The Government of Canada is taking steps to restore lost protections for all waterways by protecting the rights of Indigenous peoples and Canadians to travel on all navigable waters in Canada.

Today, the Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport, announced that the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* and the Major Works Order come into effect. The new legislation restores lost protections on all navigable waters in Canada so that Canadians can continue to enjoy the right to navigate their boats (whether they are motorized boats, canoes or kayaks) through the extensive network of waterways across the country.

Through the new Act, we continue to approve works that may interfere with navigation on navigable waters, and have created:

- a new requirement for approvals of major works, such as large dams, that significantly impact navigation on all navigable waters;
- a process to notify the public, which also provides an opportunity for Canadians to engage early before construction begins on any navigable

water;

- a mechanism where the Minister of Transport can address obstructions on any navigable water;
- directives to take into consideration the cumulative impact on navigation of multiple projects on a waterway; and
- a resolution process for reviewing navigation concerns and works, such as a bridge, when concerns remain unresolved in navigable waters not listed in the schedule (the official annex of the legislation).

Quotes

“Our Government had a clear goal when it introduced the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*, which is to restore lost protections on waterways. Today, we fulfill our commitment. Through this legislation, we address interferences to navigation while protecting Canadians’ right to navigate on Canada’s vast network of navigable waterways.”

– *The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Transport*

Quick facts

- The *Navigation Protection Act* was amended and renamed the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*. The Act restores lost protections of waterways.
- The Act includes extra protections for those waterways most important to Canadians and Indigenous peoples.
- The Act can apply to industry, all levels of government and members of the public who are:
 - owners of work(s), like a bridge or a causeway, on navigable waters;
 - dealing with interferences to navigation in navigable waters;

- planning something that will affect navigation in navigable waters.
- Ministerial Orders that support the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* - the *Major Works Order*, and *Order Amending the Schedule of the Canadian Navigable Waters Act* - will be published in the *Canada Gazette, Part II* on September 4. The *Major Works Order* comes into force as of August 28, 2019, and the *Order Amending the Schedule of the Canadian Navigable Waters Act* comes into force 30 days after its publication in *Canada Gazette, Part II*.
- The *Canadian Navigable Waters Act* provides opportunities to create new partnerships with Indigenous peoples to be involved in the administration of the Act in their traditional territories (for instance, conducting studies on navigation, monitoring works, and enforcing navigation requirements).

Associated links

- [Canadian Navigable Waters Act](#)
- [Common Project Search](#)

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