



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

---

# Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

EVIDENCE

**NUMBER 116**

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

---

Chair: Mr. Ken McDonald





## Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

• (1630)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Ken McDonald (Avalon, Lib.)):** I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 116 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans.

This meeting is taking place in a hybrid format pursuant to the Standing Orders. Before we proceed, I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of witnesses and members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. Please address all comments through the chair.

Today we're studying derelict and abandoned vessels. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) and the motion adopted on February 27, 2024, the committee is commencing its study of derelict and abandoned vessels.

I want to welcome our witnesses here today.

From the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, we have Mr. Brooks, director, marine environmental and hazards response; Ms. Nghiem, director general, response; and Ms. Verville, compliance and enforcement. On Zoom, we have Stephanie Hopper, director general, small craft harbours program. From the Department of Transport, we have Mr. Henein, director, marine protection and environmental policy; Sean Rogers, executive director, legislative, regulatory and international affairs; and Joanne Weiss Reid, director, operations and regulatory development.

Thank you for taking time to appear today.

Ms. Nghiem, I believe you are the official who is delivering remarks. You have five minutes or less for your opening statement.

You have the floor.

[Translation]

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem (Director General, Response, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** Good afternoon, Mr. Chair and committee members.

My name is Kathy Nghiem. I'm the director general of response for the Canadian Coast Guard. My colleagues and I appreciate the opportunity to appear before this committee.

[English]

As you know, authorities under the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act are shared between the Minister of Transport Canada, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard.

The Canadian Coast Guard addresses cases that involve hazardous vessels, while Transport Canada is responsible for impacts to navigation, irresponsible vessel ownership and abandoned vessels. We also work closely with other levels of government and indigenous and coastal communities, as some areas where problem vessels are found implicate other jurisdictions.

The Canadian Coast Guard acts as a single window for notifications to the Government of Canada and receives all reports of vessels of concern. Each vessel is assessed for the risk it represents to the marine environment and public infrastructure. The vessel is also added to the Government of Canada's national inventory, which is a regularly updated public repository that is available on our website.

[Translation]

If the vessel doesn't represent a hazard, the case is transferred to our colleagues at Transport Canada.

Since the launching of our national inventory of problem vessels, more than 2,100 vessels have been listed. Together with partners, we're working hard to address these problem vessels. The number has now dropped to 1,358.

[English]

Since 2016, the Government of Canada has invested nearly \$300 million in implementing a national strategy through the oceans protection plan to address these problem vessels.

WAHVA became law in 2019 and is helping to protect the marine environment, while reducing the burden on taxpayers. The Canadian Coast Guard has established a risk assessment methodology to prioritize vessels that pose the highest risks. Risks can include posing a hazard to the marine environment, the public, the economy, infrastructure and more. Since 2016, the Government of Canada has removed 791 wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels across Canada.

WAHVA makes it very clear that vessel owners have a key role to play in preventing their vessels from becoming hazardous. They must maintain their vessel, keep it in good working order and dispose of it responsibly at the end of its life cycle. Owners are responsible for the costs of addressing their problem vessel. This includes cleanup or repairs and any necessary remediation action taken by the Canadian Coast Guard.

[*Translation*]

The Canadian Coast Guard works with owners to mitigate the risks posed by a problem vessel using a graduated approach to enforcement. If the owner is unknown or fails to undertake reasonable steps to address hazards created by their vessel, the Canadian Coast Guard will take immediate action to prevent, mitigate or eliminate the risks.

[*English*]

In 2023, the Canadian Coast Guard launched its compliance and enforcement program to ensure that owners of hazardous vessels are held accountable. Under law, the Canadian Coast Guard can now issue an administrative monetary penalty to an owner who fails to comply with a direction to take actions to address hazards created by their vessels.

[*Translation*]

It's worth noting that most Canadians are responsible vessel owners who take the necessary steps to address any issues with their vessels. Our priority will always be to work collaboratively with the vessel owner.

[*English*]

Our approach also strikes a balance with the polluter pays principle, meaning those who create hazards to the marine environment will bear the costs of their actions. In those instances, the law enables the Canadian Coast Guard to cost recover its expenses from the owner or their insurer.

The Canadian Coast Guard is making tangible progress on addressing problem vessels that pose the highest risk to the marine environment or to public safety across Canada. This includes the use of innovative technologies for remote vessel monitoring and expanding our partnerships with indigenous and coastal communities. We work closely with our colleagues at Transport Canada to implement a regime that works with vessel owners to protect Canada's marine environment from the risks and hazards posed by wrecked, abandoned and hazardous vessels.

Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you for that. You had seven seconds to spare, and it's abnormal for anyone to give an opening statement in less than five minutes. I want to thank you for that.

Before I go to our first round of questioning, I want to welcome Mr. Godin, who is subbing in for somebody. I don't know who.

It's good to have Blaine Calkins back again, sitting in for somebody. He's quite familiar with the fisheries and oceans committee as he served on it for a number of years.

Of course, we have Dr. Hanley, who is subbing in for Patrick Weiler, I believe. Mr. Hanley is a regular member, but he's been moved to another committee and Mr. Weiler will be the new member. He gets to fill him in for him now for the first time—the first day.

We'll now to go our rounds of questioning.

Mr. Small.

• (1635)

**Mr. Clifford Small (Coast of Bays—Central—Notre Dame, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd also like to extend a warm welcome to our guests and visitors in our audience today.

Mr. Chair, on behalf of the entire committee, I'd like to extend our deepest condolences to the family of the individual who was lost at sea on the Coast Guard ship, the *Vincent Massey*, which docked in St. John's recently. Our deepest condolences to the family and to all who loved that dear individual who served his community.

On behalf of the committee, I'd like to thank everyone who was involved in the search and rescue effort.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My first question is this: According to Transport Canada's departmental results report in 2022 and 2023, Transport Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard aimed to remove 110 vessels of concern by March 31, 2023. What was the percentage of the desired removals that actually got removed in the 2023 fiscal year?

Mr. Henein.

**Mr. Colin Henein (Director, Marine Protection, Environmental Policy, Department of Transport):** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

My name is Colin Henein. I'm the director of marine protection policy at Transport Canada, so I'm the policy guy. I'm probably the last guy to answer the question on specific numbers of vessel removals.

I'll pass it to my colleague, Joanne, who will be able to answer that from the TC side, and then Robert Brooks will speak to that from the Coast Guard side.

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid (Director, Operations and Regulatory Development, Department of Transport):** I'm going to pass it over to the Coast Guard to respond to this question.

Thank you.

**Mr. Robert Brooks (Director, Marine Environmental and Hazards Response, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** Mr. Chair, just to confirm, are we asking for the totals solely for fiscal year 2023?

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Yes, it's fiscal year-end 2023, March 31.

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you very much.

Within the fiscal year of 2023, we removed 117 vessels. I think, as Director General Nghiem had mentioned, we've removed, in total, 791 vessels since 2016.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Okay. In 2022, \$2 billion was promised by the Trudeau Liberal government to renew the oceans protection plan. This is in addition to \$1.5 billion that was given out a few years before that. How are you on funds? Do you have enough funds to keep you going in this program, or are you short?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** Yes. The government has invested over \$300 million in a combination between the oceans protection and the renewal of the oceans protection plan. During that, since 2016, the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada and the small craft harbours program have been able to fully allocate that funding to address abandoned and wrecked vessels. We've been able to spend our full allocation every year.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** I'll ask Ms. Hopper and Ms. Weiss Reid, and you can both respond separately.

How do you feel the efficiency of the program is? Having to work between two departments, could it be better? Would it better serve its purposes if it was all under Transport Canada or all under the Canadian Coast Guard and Fisheries and Oceans?

**Ms. Stephanie Hopper (Director General, Small Craft Harbours Program, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** I can start.

For our perspective, for the small craft harbours abandoned and wrecked vessels removal program, it's going well. We receive approximately \$250,000 a year. We receive applications. We've gone over the objective. With the oceans protection plan 1.0, the objective was to remove 50 vessels, and we ended up removing 154. We have worked directly with the harbour authorities and the applicants, and we've had great success since the beginning of the program. Since the budget 2022, with oceans protection plan 2.0, the objective was to try to remove 15 vessels per year, and to date, we have removed 41.

I'm sure there are always efficiencies to be gained in different areas, but from our perspective, it's been a quite successful program to date.

• (1640)

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Could I hear from Transport Canada?

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** Thank you for the question.

The Minister of Transport regulates shipping and navigation. We jointly administer the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act with the Canadian Coast Guard. The Canadian Coast Guard, under its jurisdiction, deals with vessels that are hazardous, and Transport Canada addresses vessels that are abandoned and dilapidated.

We work very closely with the Canadian Coast Guard, nationally and in the regions, to ensure that we address the vessels appropriately within our respective mandates.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** It looks like you didn't have any projects that were planned that didn't get completed, by the sounds of it.

Again, Ms. Weiss Reid, you indicated that you exceeded your goals. Are you telling us that you're much more efficient with the public purse in this program than you expected to be? Is that possible?

**Ms. Stephanie Hopper:** I can't speak to that, but in terms of the objectives, I think, when we set out on the program in 2017, because there can be different.... We weren't sure in terms of the number of applications or how it could all be managed, but certainly, from experience and from what we've seen, we have been quite successful in delivering on and using the full funding that's been provided to us.

**The Chair:** Mr. Hardie, go ahead for six minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Ken Hardie (Fleetwood—Port Kells, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, everybody, for being here. I will not even attempt to direct the question, but if you know the answer, then please speak up.

Can you give us a rough idea, at least, of the ratio of the whole catalogue of abandoned and derelict vessels? What percentage would be pleasure craft versus, if you like, commercial, everything from fishing boats to small freighters or whatever?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you very much for the question.

The national inventory has approximately 1,350 vessels within it today. Roughly speaking, 34% of those that we've removed, we did not know the materials of them. Thirty-one per cent were fishing vessels, 14% were sailing vessels, 9% were pleasure craft, 8% were motor boats and 1% were barges.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** All right. I guess the image that we have, on the west coast at least, is that people grow tired of the boat, and the boat is tired anyway, so they just leave it somewhere. The impression that we get, at least on the west coast, is that the majority of the vessels have been pleasure craft of some sort. Is that a fair assessment?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you again for the question.

Within the remaining inventory today, approximately 24% are sailing vessels.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** They're basically pleasure craft.

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** That's correct, sir.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Okay.

Can anybody speak to the possibility that some of the problems around abandoned and derelict vessels might be related, if you like, to the devolution of small craft harbours from the federal government to local authorities? Do local authorities face an imbalance of the issue we're trying to deal with here?

I'll look up and down the line. You all look puzzled.

Ms. Nghiem, were you...?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** You could ask Stephanie Hopper for that one on small craft harbours.

**Ms. Stephanie Hopper:** We're responsible for the abandoned and wrecked vessels removal program within the small craft harbours that are under DFO's responsibility. I can't speak to those that are outside of our inventory, but certainly, I would expect that there would be similar issues elsewhere.

In terms of whether it's directly related to having divested small craft harbours in the past, certainly, if we have a higher number of harbours.... We have specifically divested over 1,100 harbours over the past 30-some years within the program, but I can't speak to whether some of those 1,100 would be experiencing the same challenges in terms of derelict vessels or not.

• (1645)

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** With respect to Ms. Barron bringing forward the notion to study this, we did look into it a few years ago, although not in a really official way. I think this committee probably needs to bring some municipal partners into this because I think they're stakeholders.

I recall in the testimony we heard that some of these abandoned vessels become homes for homeless people. You have that aspect to it. I don't know if anybody on this panel can speak to the degree to which that is still a problem, but if you basically take a derelict vessel away and deal with it, you're making somebody homeless. Is that a factor here?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you very much for the question.

Certainly as we work through the challenges in this area with our colleagues at Transport Canada and small craft harbours, we do see an increasing number of situations where vessels have become live-aboards for people who are facing a homelessness crisis in certain communities.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** When we last visited this, one of the biggest challenges of dealing with derelict vessels—and I'm thinking more specifically of pleasure craft—was the difficulty of dealing with fibreglass. There were very few processes available to actually recycle or break these down. They ended up, I think, just breaking them up, sawing them up and burying them.

Are you aware of any developments in that area?

Mr. Henein, you're nodding, so perhaps you can tell us that.

**Mr. Colin Henein:** Yes. Thanks for the question.

We know there are some challenges with fibreglass vessel recycling. There aren't a lot of facilities that will accept them. When you find a facility that does, sometimes the value of the vessel is actually less than the cost of the recycling. In addition, the challenge is that new fibreglass is seen to be cheaper and of better quality than recycled fibreglass. That's a bit of an issue.

What Transport Canada has done on the R and D side is launch an innovative solutions Canada challenge to look into potential solutions for recycling fibreglass vessels. We had two prototypes that were actually fairly successful. They were either for repurposing

the fibreglass into other industrial materials or reducing them back to their original components so that you could make new fibreglass out of them. At this time, we don't have a mandate to commercialize that technology. That's with the folks who were participating in the challenge, but certainly in the future, as R and D funds become available, for example, through the vessel remediation fund, one of the purposes some of those funds are put to would be improving R and D when it comes to fibreglass recycling.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We'll now go to Madame Desbiens for six minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens (Beauport—Côte-de-Beaupré—Île d'Orléans—Charlevoix, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses. It's invaluable to have them here with us today.

It's a fairly broad topic. Of course, it won't come as a surprise if I focus on the St. Lawrence River, the gulf, the estuary and all the traffic in that area. Which one of you is the most specialized in everything to do with the St. Lawrence River? I want to know whom to direct my questions to.

I don't think that there's any interpretation.

[*English*]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Mr. Chair, I'm sorry. I'm just noticing that my microphone is coming up instead of Caroline's, so I keep turning mine off, and hers.... I think there's a bit of a mix-up of the microphones happening as well.

**The Chair:** You turned yours on.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** I didn't turn it on—just to clarify.

**The Chair:** I believe you. There are others who wouldn't, but I do.

Okay. We'll start from the top, Madame Desbiens.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here.

It won't come as a surprise if I ask you about the St. Lawrence River, the gulf, the estuary and everything of that nature. I want to know which of you is the most specialized in marine traffic in that area, just so I know whom to direct my questions to. Let's take this approach. Every time I ask a question, whoever feels most qualified to answer it can weigh in.

First, you said that 24% of cases involve pleasure craft as opposed to commercial vessels. Does this proportion also apply to the St. Lawrence, or is the situation different on the Pacific side?

• (1650)

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you for your question.

[English]

The numbers that I have don't have the details broken down by region, but if possible we could follow up in writing with those details.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** There isn't any interpretation, Mr. Chair.

[English]

**The Chair:** It's okay now.

Continue, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you for your question.

[English]

The numbers that I have do not have the specific regional breakdowns to answer that question in detail.

Mr. Chair, if it would be possible, we'll follow up in writing. Thank you.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Thank you. I would appreciate it. It's one of my questions and it ties in with the rest of my comments.

Existing wrecks already pose a number of risks, but there are also future or potential risks. The umbrella legislation is the Pilotage Act. Pilots have a number of concerns in this area.

I personally met with members of the Corporation des pilotes du Bas-Saint-Laurent. The concern is that private pilot training courses have fewer requirements, for example with regard to French. Furthermore, corporation pilots no longer need to be in attendance for new pilot assessments, which greatly increases the risk.

Is this risk one of your concerns, in order to avoid further disasters and accidents that could exacerbate the issue posed by wrecks?

[English]

**Mr. Sean Rogers (Executive Director, Legislative, Regulatory and International Affairs, Department of Transport):** Thank you. I apologize because my earpiece is not working.

As I understand the question right now, there is a requirement for proficiency in both French and English for pilotage along the St. Lawrence, that is, in the compulsory pilotage zones covered by the Laurentian Pilotage Authority. My understanding is that this is not changing. I know that there have been concerns expressed in the past with the transition of the reform in pilotage and that it's changing, but nothing is changing.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** My main point is that the corporation's pilots are no longer required to attend the certification assessment for new pilots. They can no longer personally assess the adequacy of the French and the potential impact on the quality of communication on the vessels operating on the St. Lawrence. At least, that's what they told me.

[English]

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** Again, you have my apologies, but if I understand the question, with the pilotage reforms, the responsibility for the regulation of pilotage passed from the pilotage authorities to Transport Canada. When that transition happened, we essentially moved the system in its entirety, as it existed then, over to Transport Canada. This was in June or July 2022.

Since then we've been working on establishing collaborative processes with the Laurentian Pilotage Authority, the shipping associations and the Canadian Marine Pilots' Association to set up these committees to look at the issue of training and qualifications, recognizing that proficiency in both official languages is an important element of safety along the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Pilotage remains extremely safe in Canada by the numbers. If you look at the incident rate, it's less than 0.1%, which is to say that 99.9% of all pilotage assignments on the St. Lawrence are successfully completed. We have yet to see any evidence that language proficiency has become an issue.

I'll turn back to the Coast Guard for this one, but when communicating with the pilotage authority and ordering a pilot, it's the *langue de votre choix*. There are no restrictions on the language, and then if a marine communications and traffic services—

• (1655)

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Is this the case even for private training?

[English]

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** Is this about the private pilotage and the four north-shore ports?

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** That's what the people from the corporation are saying. There used to be official training, but now private transport companies and foreign companies can train their own pilots. The pilots still need a certification, but the St. Lawrence pilots no longer have the—

[English]

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** In the case of a pilotage certificate, when you're in a compulsory pilotage zone, you have a choice. You can order a pilot, through the Laurentian Pilotage Authority, to come aboard and guide your vessel, or if you have a mariner or your bridge crew on board is sufficiently experienced and has familiarity at the level of an experienced pilot on a particular origin-destination pairing, they can go through a certification process, which involves an evaluation. That certification process, again, is conducted in the language of their choice, because either language can be used for navigational purposes along the St. Lawrence.

We have yet to hear of any situations where the training and the choice of language of the training have become an issue, and we're not looking at varying that. At this point in the consultations we have held to date, there has been no conversation around the issue of the language of training.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Desbiens.

We'll now go to Ms. Barron for six minutes or less, please.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron (Nanaimo—Ladysmith, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to say thank you to the translators for all the work they're doing.

First of all, I'm very happy to have everybody here. I'm thankful to my colleagues for agreeing to bring forward this important study. This is an issue that is really important to my constituents but also to Canadians across the country.

As you know better than I do, the issue is different depending on where you are in Canada, but it very much is a prominent issue across Canada in general. However, we know the issue is that we have many more vessels on the west coast, but I'm going down a rabbit hole of things I didn't want to start talking about yet.

Ms. Nghiem, I believe you're out on the water. Are you seeing these vessels first-hand?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** At the Canadian Coast Guard, we have 248 employees dedicated to our marine environmental and hazard response program, which is spread regionally across the country and in headquarters. In headquarters....

I'm sorry. I have the breakdown—

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** I'm sorry. I have a lot of questions I want to get to. The reason I'm asking is to get an understanding of what we're talking about here.

I was out in a kayak recently along the coast of Vancouver Island, which is where my constituency is. We now have what locals are calling “vessel graveyards”, where we're seeing clusters of vessels being abandoned. They're leaking fuels, oils and plastics. I saw batteries. I saw barbecues and paint cans. The pollutants that were seeping into the surrounding marine ecosystem were just horrific to see.

I'm wondering if you could speak just very briefly to what implications that has. It's more important for us to hear it from you.

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** Thank you for the question.

What I can say is that there is great variety across the country in terms of the issues at play. As the single window for the Government of Canada, every notification we receive of a vessel that may be posing a hazard is assessed by the Canadian Coast Guard with a view to determining whether there are hazards that need to be addressed immediately—whether that's to protect human health and safety or the environment.

• (1700)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you.

Some of the things that I'm seeing first-hand—and I'm sure the Canadian Coast Guard is seeing these first-hand—are the impacts on food security, the surrounding marine ecosystem, the wildlife and foods. There are endless implications to this.

I'm just going to ask some more questions specific to what you're referencing here.

There are a couple of things. From the stats I have, we know that from 2016 to 2023, across Canada, for every three vessels added to the registry, there was only one removed. We know that in British Columbia, there have been five vessels for every one, so that number is much higher.

I have all these different charts and numbers that show in various regions how many are being cleaned up, how many are being added and how many are unknown. There are all these different stats we can look at, but one trend that we can see is that the number of vessels being abandoned by far outnumbers the number of vessels that are being cleaned up.

Despite the work of so many people who are out on the water—doing their best, to be clear—clearly there's a gap somewhere. I'm wondering what you see as some of the gaps and why we're not able to keep up with the vessels that are being abandoned.

For the next question, I would like to know about the prevention side of it, but perhaps we could focus on this first.

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** On the response side of things, we do prioritize vessels based on the highest risk. We have a risk methodology that helps us identify which vessels need to be addressed first to mitigate further hazards.

The variables that we consider that determine action are the location, the condition, the size, the construction material and the type and volume of pollutants on board. These all influence our ability to respond and the complexity of the response.



We do follow our methodology in the Canadian Coast Guard because often we are working in multijurisdictional areas. We do collaborative responses so that anybody who has an authority or responsibility specific to the vessel is included in the contingency planning and the response measures. We include those individuals as well, to make sure we are maximizing and leveraging everybody's responsibilities and authorities to mitigate the risks that are posed by the specific vessel.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Do you feel that you have the capacity...? Perhaps if you're not the best person, I'm happy to have somebody else answer as well.

Do you feel that there's the capacity to actually meet the need of the vessels that are out there?

What I'm hearing from mariners, people in coastal communities and first nations.... I have images of the damages in front of me. What I'm hearing directly is that there are circumstances where it's clear that the threshold, when the vessel is abandoned, is too high.

For example, speaking to one local, there was a boat right off the coast of Vancouver Island that was abandoned. It was leaking oil. It clearly needed to be cleaned up. Because the threshold wasn't high enough, it sat there for a long time. They were looking for the owners. It was a long, convoluted process. It sunk. They cleaned it up. Then in the time that they were still looking for the owners, the threshold wasn't high enough, so it sunk again. Then they had to clean it up again.

It just seems like a really inefficient system that's causing a lot of damage to the surrounding marine ecosystem.

Do you feel that there is the infrastructure and investment in place to ensure that vessels that need to be cleaned up are able to be cleaned up?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** What I can say is that, since 2016, as my colleague Ms. Nghiem has referenced, the government has invested over \$300 million to deal with this issue. Within the scope of responsibilities, through our reporting systems, when there is a case that's reported to the Canadian Coast Guard, we will assess that vessel for risk and respond accordingly.

When there is an emergency response required, the Canadian Coast Guard's focus is always on incident stabilization: to remove pollutants, secure the vessel to the greatest extent possible and monitor. As we know, Canada operates on a polluter pays principle, and we look to owners for their responsibilities to be met. In certain cases it does take some time to work through that continuum with owners to ensure they're meeting their responsibilities.

• (1705)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Barron.

We'll now go to Mr. Bragdon for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Richard Bragdon (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to each of the guests for being here today. We really appreciate your taking the time and informing us.

To the members of the Canadian Coast Guard, I want to say once again, as my colleague Mr. Small stated, our sincere condolences to

the family and to all the members of the Canadian Coast Guard. Oftentimes, people do not perhaps take into consideration the risk that is involved in the service that you provide, but, boy oh boy, for those vessels that are on the water that are in trouble or in a really tough situation, it's the Canadian Coast Guard that's first and foremost on their minds. I want to thank you for what you do, and our thoughts and prayers are with the family of the member who has passed. I wanted to say that right away.

We've heard some stats and some information about how much has been accomplished so far. From what we're hearing, you feel like you're on track to achieve the objectives within budget and on time. Am I misunderstanding that, or do I have a correct understanding of that?

If you were to assess it—and I don't know if that's for the Coast Guard or the department—do you feel like you are within budget and on time in meeting the objectives on the number of abandoned vessels that have been identified and need to be addressed?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** What I can say is that, as we collect the information in the inventory and we do our risk assessments, we prioritize based on risks, but we also do multi-year planning. We regularly re-evaluate the list of vessels that are in the queue to be remediated or removed to ensure that, as the risk profile changes, we are able to adjust our operations to continue to address the risks.

What I can also say is that, in addition to the funding we have been allocated, if we are faced with an issue where there is a vessel posing a significant risk and immediate hazard, there are mechanisms in place for us to access additional funding, if and when required, to ensure the hazards presented by that vessel are addressed promptly and efficiently.

**Mr. Richard Bragdon:** You feel like you're adequately resourced and it's just a matter of establishing the priorities, of course based on risk to the environment and the surrounding areas of the community.

Can you enlighten us a little bit further on what the process is to make sure those vessels that are at the most risk of causing the most harm to our waters and to our communities are addressed in an efficient and expeditious manner? Can you speak to that as well?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** As my colleague Ms. Nghiem has referenced, we have a risk assessment methodology in the Canadian Coast Guard that looks at a number of variables. We look at the risk and hazard a vessel could pose from an environmental perspective, risk to the economic considerations within the local area and risks to public safety and human health. It's a broad spectrum of risk.

Each year, within the allocations we have to allocate to these vessels, we have an annual planning cycle in which experts within the Canadian Coast Guard come together. We evaluate the national inventory, bring out the vessels that have had a risk assessment done to them and look at them in terms of where they rank in that risk score. Then together, through that committee of experts, we come up with a peer-reviewed list, and we challenge each other from coast to coast in each region to make sure we're allocating the funds we have to the highest priorities we're aware of at the time.

**Mr. Richard Bragdon:** Very good. Thank you.

In regard to jurisdiction, my question on this is important because I know sometimes there are provincial areas of jurisdiction, there are federal areas of jurisdiction, and then you have the differences between coastal communities and also some inshore situations or whatever, inland lakes and water systems, that have derelict and neglected vessels that need to be addressed. How is that going? Do you have a clear process to make sure jurisdictional concerns are being addressed?

Is it a collaborative approach with the provincial areas of authority or regional authorities? What do you see are the biggest challenges or impediments to that?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Generally speaking, the Canadian Coast Guard works very closely with a range of partners federally, provincially and municipally, and with indigenous nations across the country.

The process by which we operate works effectively, and we're able to access our learning networks to make sure that partners are notified. We're able to come together on scene, as required, through our incident command system. When required to respond to a large incident, we have an incident command post to make sure that partners are up to speed and fully able to contribute their authorities and mandates to resolve the issues.

• (1710)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Bragdon.

We now go to Mr. Morrissey for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.):** Thank you, Chair, and through you I will follow up on Mr. Bragdon's question.

Explain the jurisdictional line between the federal Department of Transport and DFO in relation to abandoned vessels. Who...?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** I'll start with us. The Canadian Coast Guard is responsible for any vessel that presents a hazard that requires immediate attention. Small craft harbours is responsible for the implementation of the WAHVA for anything within its boundaries of a small craft harbour. Transport Canada is responsible for vessel abandonment, irresponsible ownership and dilapidated vessels.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** It doesn't seem clear who....

My next question is this: Can you identify for the committee whether there are any known abandoned vessels, derelict, that are a threat to fish habitat?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** With respect to the risk assessment methodology that we employ at the Canadian Coast Guard, with

our partners at Transport, the vessels that we do remediate and are hazardous may, in fact, pose those threats.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Are any of those currently in waters on both coasts?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** I'm sorry, but I'm just trying to think about the details on that.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** If you don't have it, that's fair. Can you report that back to the committee, through the clerk and the chair?

I want to know what the current status is on both coasts as it relates to abandoned vessels that have a potential to harm the fish stock environment. We're the fisheries committee, so if you could.... If some other vessel runs into it, that's a different issue. It has to be a significant one, not minor, which would be some of the content on the vessel. It would be either the fuel on it or some of the cargo that was being carried. How many of those currently exist and are being monitored by somebody?

You referenced investment since 2016. What existed before 2016?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** We had our marine environmental response pollution program, and we were able to address vessels that were posing a threat with ship-sourced oil pollution or mystery spills.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Has the department always had a capability?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** We had an environmental response capability.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** No, I'm referencing removal capability, getting the deck out. Was there anything that existed before 2016?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** To expand on Ms. Nghiem's answer, yes, the Canada Shipping Act, part 8, provides authorities for the minister to take action to repair or remedy.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Was there a budgetary item in DFO as it exists now?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Maybe what I could say is that, under the oceans protection plan, it was the first time that the Canadian Coast Guard had dedicated resources to remediate and assess hazardous vessels specifically. However, previously, under the Canada Shipping Act—

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** What was the number, again, that you had, beginning in 2016, to finally take action on these?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Pardon me? Can you clarify?

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** What is the number for the oceans protection program that came in 2016? What was the value? What was the amount?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Ms. Nghiem, do you have that number?

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** What you're telling me is that you had none. There was no money before and no targeted budget existed to tackle the problem.

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** The number for the oceans protection plan was \$139.8 million in 2016.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** I just want it on the record that the Government of Canada did not dedicate any resources to this particular problem prior to 2016. Thank you.

I'm surprised that it's under the authority of the small craft harbours. Why is that?

I know I'm out of time.

• (1715)

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** I'll go to Ms. Hopper for that one.

**Ms. Stephanie Hopper:** The abandoned and wrecked vessels removal program is specific to small craft harbours owned by DFO. We have a specific program within the oceans protection program, which is—

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Excuse me. The abandoned vessel would have to be in a small craft harbour for you to deal with it. Am I correct?

**Ms. Stephanie Hopper:** Yes...for small craft harbours.

**Mr. Robert Morrissey:** Okay.

Thanks, Chair. I'm done.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Morrissey.

We'll now go to Madame Desbiens for two and a half minutes or less, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll ask Ms. Verville a question, and she may be able to respond in French.

Does your experience lead you to believe that safety on the St. Lawrence is the same as before, that it has improved or that it poses more challenges than before? I'm thinking, for example, of the marine traffic of hazardous materials.

**Ms. Annie Verville (Director, Compliance and Enforcement, Department of Fisheries and Oceans):** Thank you for the question.

I would like to refer the question to my colleagues at Transport Canada, since it falls more within their area of activity.

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Okay.

Can you answer it? The reason is that I have only two and a half minutes.

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** Yes. Thank you for the question.

[*English*]

I'll try to be quick.

Marine transportation is still one of the safest methods of transportation that exists in Canada. Marine traffic levels are increasing

all the time. We have not seen any noticeable uptick in marine incidents, accidents or occurrences that would lead us to believe the system is becoming any less safe than it was before.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** On that note, haven't you heard about the concerns raised by the Bas-Saint-Laurent pilots regarding private training?

[*English*]

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** The system that exists currently within the regulations in terms of granting pilotage certificates.... I think that's what we're talking about. With respect to the training and certification of bridge crew in order to receive a pilotage certificate, the system is intended to ensure the same level of safety as a licensed marine pilot—that is, someone who's a full-time pilot. The level of experience required in sea time as a captain or as a member of the bridge crew, the number of transits, the familiarity with the current conditions—

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Is language still a barrier?

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** It depends on the situation.

[*English*]

The number of trips required to qualify for a pilotage certificate will depend on the particular origin and destination pairing, in accordance with the level of risk to navigational safety.

Those transits are set in order to ensure that the experience level a licensed pilot has is equivalent to the bridge crew operating that vessel. It's really based on the principle that someone who conducts the same transit over many years has the same level of knowledge and experience as a marine pilot, with respect to the licensed pilot. In some sense, the experience and the knowledge of the bridge crew are equal to that of a licensed marine pilot; therefore, they can apply for a certificate.

However, the certificate only applies to a very specific set of origin and destination pairings. They don't become a licensed pilot eligible to navigate anywhere in the St. Lawrence. A pilotage certificate is only valid for a certain port of origin and a certain destination.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Desbiens.

We'll now go to Ms. Barron for two and a half minutes or less, please.

• (1720)

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As we know, it is much less expensive for us to prevent these vessels from being abandoned in the first place. Right now we have systems in place where people are unsure how to properly dispose of their vessel. They're unsure what to do once their vessel has reached the life that a vessel goes through. We need to have a bigger strategy in place, but one thing in particular I want to ask about is the identification of vessel owners.

I've heard from a constituent recently who was frustrated. He kept going in circles. He was trying to register his vessel. He had been working on this for months and could not get a clear answer as to how to register his vessel.

I'm wondering if somebody could share with me the challenges around registering vessels and how that is an important piece of this discussion on how to clean up these vessels and prevent them from sinking in the first place.

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** I work in the marine safety and security program at Transport Canada. We regularly receive emails to the minister and to others from individuals who are experiencing trouble with the online registration system. You can also use mail as well. I'm happy to follow up with the member after this meeting to take down the particulars of the individual and provide them with the information that will help them get their pleasure craft registered.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** I have provided that information to him, just to let you know, and I'd be happy to talk about it later.

The bigger issue here is not just around the registration of the vessel but being able to access the information around the registration of the vessel. I'm being told that when a vessel is abandoned, in order to clean it up, the vessel owner needs to be identified, and there are huge delays—that the system's outdated—in being able to identify the owner in a timely manner, which means that the vessel sits longer than it needs to, polluting into the surrounding marine ecosystem. I'm wondering if somebody could speak to the implications of an outdated registration system or, in fact, if that's accurate.

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** The marine safety program is responsible for the operation of the pleasure craft licensing database. One issue that we have seen is that, prior to 2010, a licence, which is really the permit like a vehicle permit you have for the car that you own, was granted on a lifetime basis. The onus was on the owner to report in to the database when the vessel ownership changed hands or if they were decommissioning the vessel and rendering it for disposal. That was not always the case. In 2010, we implemented a 10-year time period for the validity of that licensing with the hopes that over time we would see the existing lifetime licences slowly grandfathered or transitioning into a 10-year licence.

There's a total of about 2.7 million licences in the system, and there are still 1.5 million lifetime licences. Those licences go back as far as the 1960s and could involve individuals who have since passed on or whose vessels have since passed through two or three different owners. As a result, we are in the process of updating the regulations, of amending the regulations, to create a validity period of five years for pleasure craft licences, and an individual would have, I think it is, 30 days to report a change in ownership to the licensing database.

That is designed to create a stronger licensing regime to support the operation of wrecked, hazardous and abandoned vessels legislation by enabling the individuals in the navigation protection program or in the Canadian Coast Guard to more readily identify who the owner of a vessel is. To the example that's probably being brought up, if it's the case that the registration information in the licensing database is not up to date, then it can sometimes be next to impossible to track down the last owner of that vessel.

• (1725)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Barron.

We'll now go to Mr. Calkins for five minutes or less.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins (Red Deer—Lacombe, CPC):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

It's great to be back at the fisheries committee. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to ask some questions.

Just so I'm clear, based on the presentation, Ms. Nghiem, you said—I want to make sure I have the information correctly in my mind—that \$300 million has been used in the removal of derelict and abandoned vessels.

Do I have that correct?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** [*Inaudible—Editor*] invested since 2016, and that money extends to 2027.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** It's been invested and spent. It's money that has been spent. Is that correct? It's not budgeted.

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** Some of it has been spent.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** How much has been spent, please?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** I'd have to add up the columns. I need a minute to do that.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** It hasn't all been spent.

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** No.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Until when does that program go?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** There are some elements of it that are ongoing, and some that expire in 2027.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Okay. The number of vessels I have is 1,489 units in June and 1,358 in September 2024. That's a net of 131 fewer vessels. The claim is 791 vessels removed. If you've used the entire \$300 million, which you say you haven't, that would work out to \$380,000 per vessel. That seems exorbitant to me.

How much money have you collected from the owners in the user pay principle? How much has been reimbursed to the taxpayer?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** To answer your question, I will turn to my colleague from Transport to talk about the vessels remediation fund.

**Mr. Colin Henein:** Sure.

The vessels remediation fund is a future source of long-term funding that would be owner-financed, one that will enable us to not be drawing on general taxpayer revenues to address the costs of remediation when we cannot find the owner, or when the owner is unwilling or unable to do that.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** That's fine. I understand the intention.

However, my question is very specific: How much money have we collected from the owners of derelict vessels? I'm looking for a number, if you have one. If you don't have one, that's fine.

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** We'd have to follow up in writing, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I don't remember who said it specifically, but I heard somebody say that the number of vessels being added to the inventory is increasing at what I understood to be an almost exponential rate. Can that be confirmed? I think we're seeing more going in than ever before. Is that right? Maybe it was Ms. Barron asking the question.

Is that actually true?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you very much for the question.

What I can say is that the creation of the national inventory was a direct measure in response to the investments made through the oceans protection plan. As we embarked on that adventure to record and build this inventory, we saw an increase in the trend of vessels being entered into the inventory. In particular, between 2018-19 and 2023-24, we saw a big data entry into the inventory as we were discovering—

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** When was that \$300-million allocation first budgeted?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** The \$300 million referenced thus far is the investment targeted to Canadian Coast Guard, Transport and small craft harbours, in order to—

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** What year was that?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** It's since 2016.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Okay.

What I'm hearing you say is that the government has made an announcement that it's spending hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up derelict vessels, and I'm also hearing you say that there are more derelict vessels than ever.

Would it be fair to say that vessel owners on the coast now believe the government will clean up these vessels, and that's why there are more derelict vessels? Is the program creating more derelict vessels because people say, "Well, the government's going to pay to clean it up"? Is that the problem?

**Mr. Colin Henein:** Maybe it would be helpful if I speak about the overall strategy on wrecked and abandoned vessels, which has five pillars that we're working through.

We had to establish the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act. We had to develop this national inventory and risk assessment methodology, which the Coast Guard is talking about vessels coming onto and which is the source of the number of vessels coming on versus the number of vessels coming off. That's a counting system. It allowed us to put in place some short-term funding to start addressing and removing these vessels from the list.

However, we—

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** It sounds like you built a lot of process.

Of the \$300 million spent so far, how much have you spent on bureaucracy versus actually removing vessels?

• (1730)

**Mr. Colin Henein:** I don't have the numbers in front of me of what the policy spending would be on that versus the vessel removal spending. I don't know if my colleagues would have those numbers available. However, our intention is to be able to better identify the owners so that we're able to hold them responsible for their own vessels and to only be spending government money when it comes to vessel owners who are not able to be identified. Then, as well, the final pillar of this strategy is to set up this vessel-owner finance fund so that it will be vessel owners who are contributing to the costs of removing these vessels.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Calkins. Your time is up.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** We'll now go to Mr. Kelloway for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway (Cape Breton—Canso, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Let me share our condolences here with respect to the individual who lost his life on the CCGS *Vincent Massey*. When that happens, everyone in the Coast Guard feels it. My condolences to the family, the friends, the colleagues and those back home in Sydney, where the Canadian Coast Guard College resides in Westmount. Most individuals who are on any vessel received their training there. I know the cadets feel it, and I know the instructors feel it. My condolences to everyone.

Thank you for coming here today. One of the great benefits of being the last to ask questions in a particular round is that there were a lot of great questions that were asked around process and around investment. One of the recurring things that I hear is that substantial investments have been made over the years with respect to focusing on abandoned and derelict vessels, which I think is critical and key.

I appreciate that, and it seems to be having an impact, which is really good. When I'm looking at organizations or at processes that are designed to help alleviate or solve the problem, the leadership instructor in me sees that there are things that you're doing exceptionally well. I'd like to know, for example, what could enhance the job that each one of you and your departments do even further. That would be one.

I'm going to try to get in another question, so think about that and who is best to answer it. The other one is more of a micro question, but I think it's really important. One of the things that I've heard time and time again is that, if a company that owns a vessel goes belly up and the vessel is there and there are a lot of elements to the vessel that need to be taken care of—whether it be chemicals or so forth and so on—how do we approach that particular scenario when there isn't a particular owner who owns a vessel? They may be out of business. They may be somewhat trying to remove themselves from that particular process of owning up to an owner's responsibilities.

Maybe if we could start there, please, on the first question and the second question.... If I have time, I'll ask a third one.

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** I'll refer to my colleague for the first part and maybe Ms. Verville for the second part.

**Mr. Colin Henein:** What I would say is that the two main gaps that we're trying to fill right now in the wrecked, abandoned and hazardous vessels national strategy are the two regulatory pieces that are to come. We spoke about putting in place the act; that's been done. We've talked about the national vessel inventory and the risk methodology; that's under way. We've talked about short-term funding to start getting vessels out of the water; that is under way.

Where we are now is those vessel owner improvements, which my colleague was speaking to a few moments ago, to bring down that period of time so that we'll have more accurate information as to who the owners are. Then, once we have that piece in place, we're able to build this vessel remediation fund, which is part of the act and is going to allow us to have a stable funding base with owners contributing to this fund through a regulatory charge each time they license their pleasure craft or register their vessel in the vessel registry. We'll be in a position to have a regulatory charge so that those folks are contributing to vessel remediations but also to some of the more proactive pieces that we've been talking about, like, for example, public education, research and development, local capacity building or even vessel turn-in programs. Those are really the gaps that we're trying to work through in the system to actually give effect to the vision of this strategy, which is still in the process of being rolled out.

I'll pass it to my Coast Guard colleague for the second part.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Annie Verville:** The Canadian Coast Guard will keep prioritizing the task of ensuring that owners take responsibility for their vessels and that the vessels are disposed of responsibly at the end of their life cycle.

With regard to your example, the vessel remediation fund will come into force shortly. If the damage is caused by oil pollution, the Coast Guard can also submit claims to the ship-source oil pollution fund. The industry has contributed to this fund. The Coast Guard can submit claims to cover costs. The Canadian public doesn't pay for the Coast Guard's activities under these circumstances.

• (1735)

[*English*]

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Okay.

I think I have five seconds left. I appreciate the answers, and I'll yield the floor.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kelloway.

We'll now go to Mr. Small for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm seeking some clarification from Mr. Brooks.

Would you say Transport Canada's departmental results report for 2022-23 is a reliable report, Mr. Brooks?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** I can't comment on the reliability of the report. I would assume it's a report to Parliament, and, therefore, I would leave it at that.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** I would assume it's a report that ties into the work the Canadian Coast Guard and Transport Canada are doing jointly on this file.

Would you say that's correct, Mr. Brooks?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Without the report in front of me, I'm not able to confirm that statement.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** What was the number of vessels you stated to me earlier that were removed for fiscal year 2022-23?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** If I could make a clarification, with my apologies, I had previously used the figure of 117 vessels. However, I misunderstood the question. That was for 2023-24. The number I have for vessels that were removed in 2022-23 is 160.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Okay.

There's quite the discrepancy here, because according to Transport Canada's own report, only 27 vessels of concern were addressed under both departments' programs that year, and their goal was to remove 110 vessels.

Compared to the rosy picture that has been painted here today, the actual fact is that, in that fiscal year... We don't have the results for the year just behind us here, but the percentage of the goal achieved was only 25%—just 27 out of 110 vessels of concern were removed.

I might have seemed a little bit shaken, because I was thrown by the answer Mr. Brooks gave me.

How much of the budget projection was used in fiscal year 2022-23 of the \$41.6 million that's shared between both departments?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Mr. Chair, we would have to follow up with the precise details.

Thank you.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** I have it from that same report. It was \$25.2 million, which represents 61% of the proposed spend, and it yielded 25% of the desired outcomes.

I'm not sure this program is working as well as my colleague Mr. Morrissey said it was.

How many projects were planned in 2022-23 that didn't get done? Do you know the names of the projects you had in mind for that fiscal year? Do you have a list of them? If you can't provide them here now, you can provide them in writing.

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** We'd be happy to follow up specifically with that.

Maybe I could offer a clarification that may assist. Perhaps the numbers that you're referring to in the Transport Canada report were focused on the abandoned boats program, which was one component of the funding that was allocated to all departments and, therefore, may not be comprehensive and may not include all of the vessels removed by the Canadian Coast Guard, small craft harbours and Transport Canada as a total effort.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Mr. Brooks, what progress has been made on removing the remaining 83 vessels of concern since March 31, 2023? Of the ones that didn't get removed and were a part of the failed goal, do you know how many have since been removed?

• (1740)

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Chair, I would ask my colleagues at Transport Canada to speak to that specifically, because I do believe it is part of the abandoned boats program we're speaking about.

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** In terms of the vessels planned for removal, I'd have to get back to you in writing on that.

Thank you.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** How much more time do I have, Mr. Chair?

**The Chair:** You have 14 seconds, so I'd say not enough for you to get out a question.

We'll now go to Mr. Hardie for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can use his 14 seconds. Is that good? Thank you very much.

I spent part of my career with B.C.'s public auto insurer, and there are some similarities in tracing ownership and tracing vehicles between vessels and cars and trucks.

Is there the equivalent of a vehicle identification number on a boat when it's manufactured?

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** Yes, that's what the pleasure craft licence is. The terminology is perhaps a bit of a misnomer, but the pleasure craft licence is effectively a registration number, and those are the numbers that you often see on both sides of a vessel, five or six digits long.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** Those numbers are not actually affixed, as in etched into the hull of the vessel. Is that correct?

Where I'm going with this is very simple. After dealing with a lot of difficulties with chop shops and and vehicle registration numbers being reallocated to other vehicles, the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia came up with a system that basically, first of all, required the manufacturers to have hidden vehicle identification numbers so that it wasn't easy for somebody to scrub the identity of whoever owned that vehicle.

Secondly, the licensing needs to be.... I'm sorry. I'm getting into recommendations here but it sounds like you guys are—pardon the expression—at sea on this issue of trying to identify the people who actually owned the boats that are found abandoned. There should be insurance. Insurance on these vehicles should be mandatory, and with a licence that represents the insurance policy so that the only way to pass that vessel from one person to another is to relinquish

the licence, have a new one issued, make sure that the provincial sales tax is paid, etc.

We went through this discussion with you guys a few years ago, and it sounds like on the issue of trying to identify owners, nothing has changed since then. Now is your opportunity to tell me I'm wrong on that one.

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** That is the intent of the current regulatory amendments to the pleasure craft licensing, to small vessel regulations with respect to pleasure craft licensing. It will create AMPs. It will create a mandatory requirement where one didn't exist before to report a change in ownership to the database. It will eventually result in the transition away from lifetime licences, which is part of the issue with respect to tracing the owner in the first place. The creation of a five-year validity period, where you have to renew your licence every five years, is meant to get at some of these issues the member has asked about.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** What does it cost to basically abandon—well, not abandon but to decommission—the average pleasure craft?

If somebody wants to do the right thing, they have this boat that's come to the end of its natural life cycle and they want to dispose of it in a responsible way, do we know what that costs?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** I would offer that the price varies significantly.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** It varies significantly.

You can see that there's obviously a huge incentive to just basically beach it somewhere and walk away, especially if there's no real way in place yet to trace back to the owner.

• (1745)

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** We understand the current shortcomings of the way the pleasure craft licensing database is operating, and that's one of the reasons why we put forward these regulatory amendments, to try to close some of these gaps.

**Mr. Ken Hardie:** When can we see some resolution to this?

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** The regulations were published in Canada Gazette, part I, back on May 13, 2023. Because of the nature of the regulatory changes that were being proposed, we received over 800 comments. We're in the process of going through those comments, and our forward regulatory plan on the Transport Canada website has a tentative date for publication of the final regulations by December.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Hardie.

We will now go to Madame Desbiens for two and a half minutes or less, please.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Can anyone tell me how many of the 183 wrecks identified are considered hazardous wrecks?

[English]

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** We'll have to come back with the details, Mr. Chair, in writing.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Is there any operation to determine which wrecks in Quebec's St. Lawrence River contain hazardous materials?

[English]

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Within how the Canadian Coast Guard operates in the St. Lawrence and in the gulf, we are continually available to receive reports of hazardous vessels or vessels of concern that are posing a pollution risk or a risk of another hazardous nature. That service is available 365 days a year, 24-7.

In particular, there are no specific cases that I'm aware of for which we have planned operations right now in those regions to remove vessels at this time.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** So we don't know.

[English]

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** I would say that we do know. Within the inventory, we have not prioritized in our action plan removing a vessel specifically in the St. Lawrence at this point in this year.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Okay.

What would happen if, by chance, a diver were to discover a boat suspected of containing hazardous materials?

[English]

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** What would happen is that, in all cases where the Canadian Coast Guard receives a report of a vessel that's posing a concern, we have an assessment process that will be followed. The duty officer who receives that call will make the determination of whether or not an emergency response is required. If so, the Canadian Coast Guard will respond on an emergency basis 24-7, 365 days a year.

[Translation]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** You still—

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Desbiens. There are only eight seconds left, which is not enough to get a question and an answer in, so we'll go on now to Ms. Barron for two and a half minutes or less.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you, Chair.

My first question I believe would be best suited to Transport, to whoever's the best fit. As we've talked about already, this is a big issue. There's so much we could talk about around prevention, having the systems and mechanisms in place to avoid the vessels being abandoned in the first place. However, it is illegal to abandon a ves-

sel, and I know one fine went to a vessel at southern Vancouver Island, where I live. There was another one on the east coast. I had information just recently that there were five fines across Canada totalling \$55,500.

Now, when I looked on the same database this morning, that number had changed to two fines that had been given out to owners of vessels who had abandoned their vessels totalling \$26,600. I don't know why we would see a discrepancy or, even worse, fewer fines from today than I saw just a few weeks ago. I'm wondering if somebody can provide some reflections on what's going on.

• (1750)

[Translation]

**Ms. Annie Verville:** I can shed some light on this issue.

Transport Canada and the Canadian Coast Guard have separate powers to impose administrative monetary penalties. Right now, the Transport Canada registry contains two administrative monetary penalties under the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act, while the Coast Guard registry contains five. Perhaps the existence of these two registries explains the confusion over the number of penalties.

[English]

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you.

How much do we know about how much it costs to clean up a vessel? Does anybody have that information? I guess it depends on the size, but let's say it's an average-sized pleasure craft on the west coast.

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you very much for the question.

The range in cost to address hazardous, wrecked or abandoned vessels very much depends on a number of factors, including its location, the state of the vessel—if it's sunk, if it's partially sunk, if it's floating—its size as well as the construction of the hull and the material that it has, and the volume of pollutants on board. In our experience, what we can say is that, when the Canadian Coast Guard intervenes to address these vessels that require our attention, we see a range that could be as little as \$5,000 to \$10,000, but when you get into the commercial vessels that deal with significant pollutants and large sizes, you could be in the range of \$25 million to \$35 million to remove the vessel and dismantle it.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Ms. Barron.

We'll now go to Mr. Bragdon.... No, he has given his time to Mr. Calkins. I apologize for that.

Mr. Calkins, go ahead for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I do want to pursue that, Mr. Brooks.

Can you explain to the committee what we're actually responsible for when it comes to removing a derelict vessel from the water? Are we simply responsible for getting it on land or taking it to a landfill? Can you explain to me what the process is that's been set up and that the taxpayers are paying for?



It sounds to me like we have to dismantle and cut everything up. Surely to goodness there's scrap. If we're dealing with metal, we're going to get some money back. Can you explain to me what we're all responsible for?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you for the question. I'll do my best.

Under the Coast Guard's mandate to address wrecked, abandoned and hazardous vessels, we maintain response officers across the country who are responsible for deploying to an incident site. They have the training required to undertake initial risk assessments to understand the nature and the risk of the vessel. They also have the training required to deploy any pollution countermeasures required during that initial incident stabilization and to protect the marine environment while plans are made. When we move to take action to deconstruct a vessel, that is not a skill set that is within the Canadian Coast Guard. Therefore, we work with our colleagues at PSPC for a contract to hire professional salvors to deal with the deconstruction.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** You're saying that in some of these cases it's \$25 million per vessel.

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** That's correct. We've had cases where we've remediated vessels in that range, including the *Kathryn Spirit*, which was in the Beauharnois region in Montreal. We've also had experience in remediating bulk oil out of the *Manolis L*, which is a vessel currently sunk off the Fogo Island, and we saw costs in that range as well. Previous to that, we had an estimated cost of \$25 million to remove oil from the *Zalinski*, which is in the Grenville Channel.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Yes, but these are just a few. You said yourself that 25% of derelict vessel are sailboats. Is that right? I think that was the number. A 30-foot sailboat, on average, is a \$100,000 to \$150,000 as a brand new purchase. Of course, that vessel wouldn't be worth that. When you're doing a triage, there are environmental considerations and so on, but surely to goodness there's some low-hanging fruit and some easy things that are not that hard and not that expensive.

Is that a consideration when we're talking about removing some of these vessels?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you for the question.

There's no question that, as the Canadian Coast Guard looks at our list of priorities, we follow our risk assessment process to ensure that we are allocating our money to the highest-risk vessels. That is the basis upon which we take action.

• (1755)

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** That's good to know.

The budget in 2015 for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans was \$1.9 billion. That budget has gone up continuously since 2016, to the point where, had we continued with the \$1.9 billion all the way through, the department has had an extra \$13.3 billion in the last nine budgets. That would have been enough to probably rebuild every small craft harbour in the nation, and it certainly should have been enough to remove every derelict vessel that we have. I'm wondering, as a taxpayer, and as taxpayers are looking at this, what do we have to show for it?

On the derelict vessel file, we only have 791 vessels removed. What is the estimate of the number of vessels? Have you done a full count on all of Canada's coastal waters that we're responsible for, or are there still vast areas that still need to have an inventory taken?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you very much for the question.

The national inventory is an evergreen inventory of vessels, so that number that's within the inventory can change quite often as vessels are reported to the Canadian Coast Guard. Not all vessels that are reported, which actually make their way into the inventory, end up being hazardous, wrecked or abandoned in terms of the definitions. As we move through that assessment to do that quality assurance check and to make sure we are identifying risk, there are some vessels that we do remove from the inventory because they do not meet the threshold.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Can you confirm how many more employees work for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans now in 2024 than were employed in 2015?

How many more staff are there, cumulatively? Does anybody know?

**Ms. Kathy Nghiem:** I'll follow up in writing, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Calkins. Your time is up.

We will now go to Mr. Cormier for five minutes or less, please.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Cormier (Acadie—Bathurst, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I want to clarify something said earlier. We heard that owners were responsible for removing their abandoned vessels. I think that my question was already asked earlier, but I just want to be sure.

Do you have any data on the number of abandoned vessels removed at the owner's expense, as opposed to the number removed at the federal government's expense? Were these figures provided earlier? If you don't have these figures, is it because you don't collect them, or because you don't have them on hand right now?

**Ms. Annie Verville:** The Canadian Coast Guard's priority is to work with owners to ensure that they take the necessary steps themselves. As a result, this type of data isn't collected when owners, once informed of their obligations under the legislation, take the necessary steps.

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Here's an example. If, in a given year, 100 abandoned vessels are removed from the water, we don't know the proportion removed at the owner's expense or at the government's expense.

**Ms. Annie Verville:** My colleague, Mr. Brooks, identified the number of abandoned vessels removed by the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada or Fisheries and Oceans Canada as part of the small craft harbours program. However, the data isn't tracked when the owners themselves took action.

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Why isn't it tracked?

**Ms. Annie Verville:** I can't answer that question.

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Don't you think that this type of tracking should be done to determine what costs the owners cover, as opposed to what the government and taxpayers pay to have abandoned vessels removed? It seems like a good idea, unless I'm mistaken.

[English]

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** I might be able to provide some.... We do track. We have provided warnings or orders to over 95 boat owners. We are looking at compiling the numbers of those who have taken action to remove their own vessels.

As my colleagues were saying, we track the ones that we remove ourselves. We can look to see if we can get that data out of our database to see whether those we have provided orders or warnings to have taken the action that's required to address their vessels.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Can you provide an example of how much it costs to remove a small boat, as opposed to a large boat? I want to know the approximate cost of this type of operation. Perhaps you already have a record of expenses incurred in recent years that shows the lowest cost paid and the highest cost.

• (1800)

[English]

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you very much for the question.

As mentioned earlier, there's a very large range in cost when you're talking about the removal of a wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessel. It very much depends on the location in the country. As you can appreciate, Canada has the longest coastline in the world and some very remote areas.

In cases where it is remote, that can increase the cost even for a small vessel. Removing a 30-foot vessel in Haida Gwaii is likely to cost significantly more than in the port of Vancouver, for example, given local capacity.

In general, I can say that we have seen cases that range as low as \$5,000 to \$10,000 to remove a vessel when it's a simple case where we can just attach a crane, remove the vessel onto a barge and take it away to a recycling facility. In other cases, it does require in situ deconstruction with long times and multiple crews on site.

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Are those vessels owned by local Canadians or more international people, corporations or whatever? What's the ratio? Maybe it was asked before, but just for clarification.... Sometimes I'm not listening.

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** I do not have facts and figures in front of me to break down the proportion of vessels owned by Canadians versus non-Canadians.

[Translation]

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Ms. Hopper, if I'm not mistaken, you're the director general of the small craft harbours program. Is it for the Atlantic side only, or for all of Canada?

**Ms. Stephanie Hopper:** It's for Canada.

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** Okay.

Do you know how many vessels are abandoned on the Atlantic side, compared with the situation on the Pacific coast, for example?

**Ms. Stephanie Hopper:** Are you talking about the current situation?

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** I'm talking about the current number of vessels or boats that haven't yet been removed from our waters. Are there any on the Atlantic side right now?

**Ms. Stephanie Hopper:** I'll refer the question to my colleague, Ms. Nghiem. On our end, the program concerns only small craft harbours.

**Mr. Serge Cormier:** I'm sorry, the question may have been asked earlier about the number of vessels on the Atlantic coast compared with the situation on the Pacific coast.

[English]

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you very much for the question.

What I can say is this: For the Atlantic coast, since 2016, 459 vessels have been added to the national inventory. In that same time period, 194 vessels in that inventory have been removed from the Atlantic coast.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Cormier.

We'll now start our last round of questioning.

We'll start off with Mr. Small for five minutes or less.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

In 2019, the current government passed the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act. Last year in July, CTV reported that only two fines have been issued since the passing of the law.

Why is the Coast Guard taking so long on the issuing of fines when it comes to abandoned vessels? In relation to the number of vessels that have been cleaned up, there seems to be a very small ratio of charges. There must be a lot more negligence than what is being reflected in those charges, obviously, Mr. Brooks.

[Translation]

**Ms. Annie Verville:** I'll answer the question.

The Canadian Coast Guard created its compliance and enforcement program in April 2023. To date, we have issued five administrative monetary penalties to owners who failed to comply with a Canadian Coast Guard order to address the issues with their hazardous vessels.

I want to give the floor to my colleague, Joanne Weiss-Reid, who can elaborate on what Transport Canada has done in its area of activity.

[English]

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** I'm going to speak about the intent of the act. It is to hold vessel owners accountable for the duration of the life cycle of the vessel. In order to do this, we do education, we work with owners of vessels and we have a graduated approach to enforcement.

First and foremost, understanding who the owner of the vessel is—as we talked about—is a challenge. We're doing some work to increase the ability to identify owners of vessels. When it comes to compliance for abandoned vessels, we need to know who the vessel owner is in order to apply an administrative monetary fine.

• (1805)

**Mr. Clifford Small:** I have one more little thing on that.

Does that 2019 act go back retroactively, or does it just cut off right there at the date when the act was passed?

[Translation]

**Ms. Annie Verville:** Under the Wrecked, Abandoned or Hazardous Vessels Act, owners have had to meet their obligations since July 2019, meaning since the effective date of the act. It isn't retroactive.

[English]

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Thank you.

Carry on.

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** Okay. We have a graduated approach to enforcement.

First and foremost, we have to find out who the owner is. Sometimes it takes some time to do that. In cases where we find the owner and apply the AMP, the intent is to hold the owner accountable and have them take action to remove the vessel. We have several warnings. We've issued 95 to date. We're working with the owners to find a way to remove the vessels. We issued two AMPs on the Transport Canada side. In those cases, the intent there is also to bring the owner into compliance and ensure they take appropriate action to address their vessel.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** This is about bringing owners into compliance, not to deter others from breaking the law. Is that correct? You'd think that you'd be issuing these fines, where possible, as a deterrent, because it seems like the derelict vessels are just piling up for some reason. If the federal government says they're going to come in and take my trash out, I'm going to let them come in and take it out instead of taking it out myself.

Is that what's happening on the waters?

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** It's important to understand that, when we look at the national inventory, many of those vessels are legacy vessels and have been abandoned or derelict perhaps for some time. Therefore, there are no owners. In other cases, we've been aware of instances where the owner may have left Canada, in which case the powers do not extend outside of our borders. In other cases, the owner may be deceased.

What we are seeing is an increase in fines and administrative monetary penalties being assessed to non-compliant owners, and when we do have new cases, this is very much the direction we

take. We respond to stabilize and prevent pollution. Then we work, as we can, with owners to ensure a good result. Where there is non-compliance, we do have the tools in the legislation to hold them accountable now.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Keep up the good work.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Small.

We'll now go to Mr. Kelloway for five minutes or less, please.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Thanks, Mr. Chair.

During your testimony, you talked about the regulatory changes that are ongoing, and you talked about 800 or so pieces of feedback from a variety of different stakeholders.

I'm wondering if it's possible to give us a sense of what those 800 stakeholders are saying and what themes may be present to you folks as you're reviewing this.

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** There are several broad themes that emerged from the consultation. Probably the top two or three revolved around the proposed implementation of a fee in the amount of \$24 every five years for the renewal of the pleasure craft licence.

The other main issue that we saw was the implementation of this five-year validity period. Over time, the lifetime licences will be converted to five years if there is still a current owner of the vessel, and the holders of 10-year licences will eventually be transitioned over to a shorter, five-year period. As you can imagine, there were a lot of comments on those two main elements.

There was an understanding that there needed to be better information on the owner, but at the same time, that information comes at a cost.

• (1810)

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** That's very helpful.

In terms of the regulatory changes, I think we've addressed some of them, but I'm just wondering if you can dive into some of the key items you're proposing as we move forward.

The second piece of that was brought up by one of the witnesses around the graduated enforcement approach. I had that circled in terms of unpacking what it is. You did go over that a bit, but can you go through the step-by-step process of the graduated enforcement approach, just for my purposes? I want to clearly understand it.

Maybe I can go with a follow-up there and then over to you.

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** Thank you for the question. I'll attempt to be brief.

There were many different changes. One, as I mentioned before, was to establish a five-year validity period for all pleasure craft licences. Specified licence-holders have 30 days to transfer a licence upon the purchase of their pleasure craft. Another was to expand the Ministry of Transport authorities to cancel a pleasure craft licence for reasons of non-compliance. An important one is to expand the scope of the licensing requirement to apply to all wind-powered vessels, or sailboats, that are more than six metres in length. As I mentioned, there's the service fee as well to help recover the cost of operating the program.

In terms of the graduated enforcement process, I'll turn to my colleague Joanne.

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** Thank you.

I'll just go through when there is an abandoned vessel. For instance, we will try to identify the owner through vessel registration, speaking to the community and looking to see if, in fact, there is an owner registered to the vessel. If there is not, we do have some opportunities under the act. We have the authority to post a 30-day notice to see if the owner will identify themselves before we take action on the vessel.

Where the owner is known, we would work with the owner. We could either issue an order, or we can issue a warning to let them know that they need to bring their vessel into compliance. If they refuse to do so or do not have the means to do so, then we would think about the next course of action. If they do have the means to pay an administrative monetary penalty, then we would apply an AMP to the owner.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** I have 30 seconds left....

Go ahead. You were going to say something—my apologies.

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** In a case where we do take action to remove the vessel, we would be looking to recover the cost of the removal of the vessel.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Right.

You mentioned other measures that could be taken if an individual, for whatever reason, says, "I'm not paying it", or you can't find someone to pay for it. You mentioned other measures. Can you unpack that a bit as to what other measures are in the tool box?

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** Just for clarification, is the question about other measures to bring the owner to compliance?

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Yes, that's correct.

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** In cases where the vessel is not in compliance, we would work to see what kinds of measures they can take to bring the vessel into compliance. We would provide them with education on how they can do that to meet the regulations. In cases where they cannot, we would assess our next steps to take actions to address the vessel.

**Mr. Mike Kelloway:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

We will now go to Madame Desbiens for two and a half minutes or less, please.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Let me ask you a quick question.

I was a bit concerned to learn earlier that it couldn't be determined whether any wrecks in the St. Lawrence pose a threat to ecosystems. I find this concerning given that, in 2022, Canada's oceans protection plan received \$2 billion in funding over nine years. This funding sought to better manage marine navigation and avoid the risk of marine incidents and to create an inventory of hazardous wrecks.

Why hasn't anything been done in the St. Lawrence yet? Is there at least a plan?

• (1815)

[*English*]

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Maybe to clarify, there have been a number of vessels that the Canadian Coast Guard has responded to in the St. Lawrence River and in the gulf over the history of the Coast Guard. What I was offering, Mr. Chair, was that I was not aware of any specific ongoing cases that were taking attention for remediation at this time.

The number that I have in total for the central region of vessels removed since 2016-17 is 106. I do not have the specific breakdown of which vessels were in the St. Lawrence, but, if it's of interest, we certainly could provide those numbers after the fact.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** Did you identify or remove from the water 106 vessels? Sorry, I didn't quite catch that.

[*English*]

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you for the opportunity to clarify.

One hundred and six vessels have been removed from the environment since 2016-17 in our central region of operations for the Canadian Coast Guard, which includes the St. Lawrence River and the gulf.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Caroline Desbiens:** I agree. So that includes the St. Lawrence and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Do we know whether any of these vessels contained hazardous materials?

[*English*]

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** What I can offer is that, in most of the cases where the Coast Guard intervenes to remove vessels, it is because there has been a determination of hazard, and we would have taken action to deal with that threat.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Madame Desbiens.

We will now go to Ms. Barron for two and a half minutes or less, please.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I was reflecting while we've been talking. First of all, we know that five fines since 2019 is highly inadequate. There are many reasons behind this that I think we could talk about for a long time.

I want to talk about the fact that I talk to and know so many responsible boat and vessel owners who are frustrated about this entire situation. One thing that's very clear is that we don't have a clear process for vessel owners to understand how to navigate these systems for the entire life of their vessels.

One thing in particular where there seems to be a real gap is around the dismantling and recycling of vessels. We touched on this a little bit, but can you clarify whose responsibility it is to develop the systems to appropriately and adequately dismantle and recycle these vessels?

**Mr. Colin Henein:** Thank you for the question.

There is no single authority in Canada that is responsible for vessel recycling. It's a co-operative effort between the federal government, for example, which has certain requirements relating to discharges into the water and environmental protection in that regard.... We also work very closely with our colleagues in the provinces and the municipalities, which are responsible for matters such as local land use planning, when the boats are removed from the water for recycling, labour standards and those kinds of situations. It's more of a co-operative approach.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you.

I'm happy you brought that up because that's actually another example that's come up.

On Vancouver Island, where I'm lucky to live, there's a place called Union Bay. In Union Bay, there has been some dismantling and recycling happening. Interestingly enough, even a U.S. vessel was brought up to be dismantled and recycled at the site, when we haven't even figured out how to dismantle and recycle our own vessels here.

There have been multiple warnings provided to the centre. It's been leaking copper at levels 100 times the legal limit and zinc at 13 times the legal limit. There has been no process to ensure that this is being done in an environmentally sustainable way. We've had the B.C. Minister of Environment and Climate Change and the B.C. Minister of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship call on the federal government to urge it to take more action to regulate the dismantling and recycling of vessels at this site.

I'm wondering if somebody could share today whether they feel that this work is being done in co-operation with provinces to ensure that we have adequate recycling and dismantling centres that actually take into account workers' rights and also the environment that's surrounding these centres.

• (1820)

**The Chair:** I'm sorry, Ms. Barron.

If we could get an answer to that in writing, it would be better. Ms. Barron has gone way over her two-and-a-half-minute mark.

We'll move on now to Mr. Small for five minutes or less.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As a welcome back gift to the MP Barron and the NDP—welcome back to the opposition side—I'm going to offer you that five minutes I had.

**The Chair:** Just to let Ms. Barron know, Mr. Bragdon and I negotiated this.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh!

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you so much.

To my colleague, I have never left the opposition side, but I always appreciate warm welcomes, consistently.

Perhaps I can ask for a response to my question.

Thank you so much for the time.

**Mr. Colin Henein:** I'm happy to provide a response to that question. Thank you for raising the issue of Union Bay.

As I mentioned, it is a co-operation between the federal government, the province and the local authorities. I believe the question was whether we are having that good co-operation.

I can say that we are. There are discussions relating to that particular issue happening regularly between the Department of the Environment, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Transport Canada, the various provincial agencies that are responsible, local indigenous groups and others in order to make sure all of the rules are being followed.

I am aware of the fact that there has been some enforcement action taken by the province when it comes to Union Bay, even recently. It is certainly being looked at quite carefully by all of these orders of government, which are together taking into account the situation there on the ground.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you. My next question is around mooring plans.

On the west coast, we have situations where people are anchoring in areas where they're allowed to anchor, but there's no plan around the spot where they're anchoring. I hate to use this example, but it was provided to me, so now I'm going to. A young man went out to the pub and somebody offered him a boat for \$100. He thought, "Oh, this is great. I'll get a boat." He got the boat for \$100, then realized the boat was far too damaged to be worth doing anything with. He just left it there. It was anchored and left to sit there because it was far more expensive for him to do anything about it than it was to just leave it sitting there.

One thing that's been brought to my attention is this: If there was a mooring plan that provided some sort of planning process for where boats can be left anchored, it would help us with the identification of and responsibility for these vessels.

I'm wondering if I can get a federal perspective on that.

**Mr. Sean Rogers:** I think this points to the importance of the regulatory changes I spoke about earlier in the context of making sure the information in the pleasure craft licensing database is as up to date as possible and the vessels are appropriately marked, so the previous owner in a transaction such as that could be tracked down via the appropriate processes. At that point, once it becomes a vessel that is abandoned, dilapidated or derelict....

I'll first pass the microphone to my colleague in the navigation protection program.

**Ms. Joanne Weiss Reid:** Thank you.

We consider a vessel that has been moored unlawfully or without consent for over 60 days dilapidated. Therefore, we'd be able to take action on it.

**Ms. Lisa Marie Barron:** Thank you.

My final question, because I believe I have a bit of time left, is around the co-operation we were talking about.

I know there are many first nations in my riding. For example, the Snuneymuxw First Nation has an entire pilot. They're ready and willing to do the work alongside the federal government to clean up the vessels in Snuneymuxw territory. They just need to see the federal government working alongside them. There's a wealth of local knowledge—a ton. They just need the resources to do the work effectively.

What does that look like?

• (1825)

**Mr. Robert Brooks:** Thank you very much for the question.

The Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada and our Government of Canada partners recognize the important role that indigenous communities, in particular first nations, play on the west coast. Through the oceans protection plan, there have been investments made to expand the participation of indigenous communities in the marine emergency response network. We are leveraging those investments to do so and growing those partnerships.

In particular, we're working on the west coast with the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers, for example, and we're piloting ways to understand how we can bring indigenous communities into the network to monitor wrecked, abandoned or hazardous vessels—or anything of concern—and contribute that information back to the system in order to be full partners in that.

We're also leveraging technology through Canadian firms such as BRNKL that provide us with monitoring abilities from a remote destination. We can put a kit on board that's about the size of a suitcase, unpack it and understand whether the vessel is staying in the same location, taking on water or listing—things like that. We're working very effectively, I think, to expand those partnerships and find nations that would like to partner with us on this.

**The Chair:** It's over time. We're going to call it a day.

I believe Mr. Hanley has something he wants to say before I thank our witnesses for their appearance here today.

Mr. Hanley.

**Mr. Clifford Small:** [*Inaudible—Editor*]

**Mr. Brendan Hanley (Yukon, Lib.):** I'll be quick, Mr. Small.

As the chair mentioned at the beginning, I am moving to the indigenous and northern affairs committee. I want to take this chance to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your excellent chairing over the three years I've been on this committee.

I also want to thank the clerk, the analysts and the supporting staff, and I want to thank all the members for their participation, collegiality and support. I think it's been a great committee. I've learned a lot. We've accomplished a lot, and I hope that continues.

I'll be back next week as a sub for the Yukon report, so I will be seeing more of you.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Perfect. I want to say a big thank you—

**Mr. Richard Bragdon:** I have a point of order.

**The Chair:** Mr. Bragdon, you're a little bit late.

**Mr. Richard Bragdon:** I won't keep you over time. This is very collegial.

**The Chair:** Okay. Please be quick.

**Mr. Richard Bragdon:** I just want to say, Dr. Hanley, that you've been a pleasure to have on the committee. I always enjoy your feedback and input. I look forward to seeing you come quite regularly as a sub as we try and draft Mr. Calkins in as much as we can, too, through subbing. It's great to have you show up any time. You're welcome.

Thank you, witnesses.

**The Chair:** Thank you to the Department of Transport and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for your appearance here today and for sharing your knowledge with the committee for two hours. I'm sure we'll see you again somewhere along the way.

Just as a reminder, next Monday we will start consideration of version one of the draft report on the Yukon salmon study. That's the one Mr. Hanley might be interested in. Again, enjoy.

• (1830)

The meeting is adjourned.









Published under the authority of the Speaker of  
the House of Commons

---

### SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

---

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the Copyright Act. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the Copyright Act.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

---

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: <https://www.ourcommons.ca>

Publié en conformité de l'autorité  
du Président de la Chambre des communes

---

### PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

---

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la Loi sur le droit d'auteur. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre des communes.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la Loi sur le droit d'auteur.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

---

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante :  
<https://www.noscommunes.ca>