



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Mike Morrice

Member of Parliament
Kitchener Centre

The Honourable Omar Alghabra
Minister of Transport

December 6, 2021

Dear Minister Alghabra,

I am writing to you today to raise awareness of the life-saving impact that wearing life jackets or other personal flotation devices (PFDs) can have for passengers while boating. It has been well-documented that not wearing life jackets or PFDs properly is the greatest risk factor for water-related deaths among all Canadians over the age of four. As such, I am asking you to amend the current boating regulations to require that life jackets or PFDs be worn while aboard a small vessel, in order to potentially save hundreds of Canadians from losing their lives unnecessarily each year.

Currently, the Small Vessel Regulations (SOR/2010-91) require that for each passenger on a small vessel, a life jacket or PFD must be on board as well. I am advocating for the Small Vessel Regulations to be amended to require that all passengers of all ages wear a properly fitting, approved personal flotation device or lifejacket while on or on a board of any size for any purpose.

I recently heard from a constituent who is part of the KWC Bassmasters, a fishing club and local branch of the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society (BASS). The KWC Bassmasters already follow boating safety rules that exceed those of the Canadian government: members of the group have to wear lifejackets or PFDs whenever the boat's motor is on. My constituent felt that all Canadians should be equally safe while on the water — not just experienced fishing clubs.

My constituent's concerns are upheld by the research. In their *Flotation Report* documenting 20 years of research, the Canadian Red Cross found that in at least 85% of water-related deaths, a lifejacket or PFD was not worn properly by the victim. They stated unequivocally that: "By far the most effective boating safety intervention internationally has been legislation mandating PFD wearing, coupled with effective enforcement."

Additionally, the Canadian Safe Boating Council has estimated that this measure could save at least 100 lives each year in Canada, which the Canadian Red Cross corroborated, stating that wearing a lifejacket would prevent up to 90% of boating-related drownings.

Amending the Small Vessel Regulations to require that passengers wear their life jackets or PFDs is a simple, effective change that will prevent hundreds of needless deaths. I urge you to bring this amendment forward, so that we can act promptly to stop any more Canadians from

losing their lives to such a tragic and preventable cause.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Morrice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping underline.

Mike Morrice,
MP for Kitchener Centre