

SAVE VICTORIA HARBOUR

NEWS RELEASE

September 23, 2010

OUTDATED HARBOUR SAFETY PLAN NEEDS UPDATE BEFORE MARINA DEVELOPMENT GOES FURTHER – REPORT

VICTORIA, BC -- A report by independent aviation safety consultants, QualaTech Aero Consulting, states that Victoria Harbour lacks a Safety Management System and is operating under a ten-year-old Transport Canada risk assessment, with no plans to put an airport safety management system in place until 2014 and no definite date to implement water airport aviation regulations.

The Save Victoria Harbour group is asking the Federal Minister of Transport, Chuck Strahl, to put an updated Safety Management System in place as an urgent priority, and that the mega-yacht marina proposal be assessed against the updated system before being allowed to go ahead.

“We have the busiest water airport in Canada and one of the busiest in the world. It’s a lot busier than many land-based airports that have full safety management systems,” said Barry Hobbis, whose company’s tiny harbour ferries clock more than 50,000 kilometres in the harbour each year.

“We’ve been fortunate that no serious accident or fatality has happened under the out-of-date safety plan, but everyone knows the social, environmental and economic costs of accidents. A lot has changed in Victoria harbour and in safety standards since 2000, and we need the best possible safety regime as a priority.”

Key findings of QualaTech Aero’s 34-page study are:

- Transport Canada has a triple role, as regulator, operator and policeman of Victoria’s harbour airport, and as such, has a triple responsibility to ensure safety.
- The most recent harbour risk assessment was done in 1999 and its ten-year projections are now obsolete.
- Certified airports across Canada (including Victoria’s water airport) *must* implement safety management systems to comply with regulations; however, Transport Canada has exempted water airports from this requirement three times, most recently until 2014.
- It is not clear that Transport Canada gave sufficient due diligence to the potential hazards and associated risks when granting its approval for the mega-yacht marina.

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The report recommends:

- Transport Canada should undertake a formal safety case for the harbour's marine and air operations for the period 2011 - 2020.
- Transport Canada should not consider any further applications for development in the harbour and should hold any existing approvals in abeyance until the safety case is complete.

QualaTech Aero Consultants Ltd. (www.qualatech.ca) is an aviation consultancy with extensive Canadian and international aviation experience. Consultants have held senior posts in Canada, with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), International Air Transport Association (IATA), leading aviation operations, systems and service companies; including but not limited to: international airport and civil aviation authorities and Tribunals (Transportation Appeal Tribunal of Canada – TATC).

Save Victoria Harbour (www.savevictoriaharbour.com) is a diverse group of citizens from the Greater Victoria area who are concerned with the future of Victoria's precious harbour. The group has been in existence since 1993.

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Highlights attached
Full Report available: www.savevictoriaharbour.com