

Ken Watson
RR1
Elgin, ON K0G 1E0

July 10, 2012

Gord Brown, MP
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Brown,

In your press release of July 10, 2012, I would like to point out a rather glaring error of fact. In that release you state: *"The Rideau has three mandates; water management, maintenance and locking boats."* That statement is incorrect, there are more mandates than just those three – two overriding mandates are to protect and present the cultural heritage of the Rideau Canal, and to protect and present the natural heritage of the Rideau Canal. The Rideau Canal itself, of course, has no mandate, it is Parks Canada, the federal agency in charge of the care and control of the Rideau Canal, that has been given mandates for the Rideau Canal. Those mandates are enshrined as part of the Parks Canada Charter supported by federal legislation such as the Parks Canada Agency Act and the Historic Canals Regulations.

As a reminder, the mandate of Parks Canada, clearly stated in their charter, is: *"On behalf of the people of Canada, we protect and present nationally significant examples of Canada's natural and cultural heritage, and foster public understanding, appreciation and enjoyment in ways that ensure the ecological and commemorative integrity of these places for present and future generations."*

The charter goes on to clarify that Parks Canada is committed: *"To protect, as a first priority, the natural and cultural heritage of our special places."*

Your three mandates give the impression that you believe the Rideau Canal is simply a recreational waterway and a water control system. I truly hope that this is not your understanding of the canal, although I know that it is the understanding of some of your federal colleagues. The Rideau Canal is a living example of our Canadian heritage. Its primary value is not as a recreational waterway but as an extremely significant Canadian heritage site, and also as a globally significant World Heritage Site. If the historic significance of the Rideau Canal to present and future generations of Canadians was understood by federal politicians, we wouldn't be seeing these brutal cuts.

Attempting to limit the discussion to simply how to implement cuts, or increase revenue, does a disservice to our heritage as Canadians. Any discussion of the future of the Rideau Canal must include the federal government's responsibility to the natural and cultural heritage of this very special place.

Your truly,

Ken Watson

cc. Hon. Peter Kent. Right Hon. Stephen Harper. Save Our Rideau



Gord Brown, MP Leeds-Grenville

Constituency Office
2399 Parkedale Ave, Unit 120, Brockville, ON K6V 3G9
Tel: 613-498-3096 Fax: 613-498-3100
E-mail: gord.brown.c1@parl.gc.ca

House of Commons
138 East Block, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6
Tel: 613-992-8756 Fax: 613-996-9171
E-mail: gord.brown@parl.gc.ca

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Gord Brown holds public meeting on Rideau

Brockville – Gord Brown, Member of Parliament for Leeds-Grenville, today announced that a public consultation meeting concerning the Rideau Canal will take place at the Lombardy Agricultural Hall from 5:30 – 7 pm on Tuesday, July 24.

Earlier this year, Parks Canada announced plans to reduce the hours of operation on the Rideau Canal.

“When I heard about this, I immediately met with my colleagues and working together we had the canal operating hours reinstated for this year,” explains Brown.

“In return for ensuring there were no changes this year we are to gather information from stakeholders and residents along the canal to determine the economic impact of the canal and the impact that reduced hours would have,” he notes.

“This meeting will be a follow-up to the consultation I announced two weeks ago,” says Brown. At that time he solicited written comments from businesses and residents about the impacts of a reduction of hours on the Rideau.

“We are also looking for ideas on how the canal can create additional revenue and how it can decrease expenditures,” he comments.

“The Rideau has three mandates; water management, maintenance and locking boats. I am seeking solutions within those areas as well as ideas for the future that may include changing the mandates of the canal,” he explains.

Written submissions about impacts and solutions will be collected at the meeting and a few minutes will be provided for people provide a brief synopsis of their submission.