

Project to modernize the wharfs of the Oka ferry**START OF THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 7:00 P.M. ON MARCH 27, 2006**

Québec, March 13, 2006 – The commission of the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE), composed of Mr. Qussaï Samak, Chairman, and Ms. Lucie Bigué, Commissioner, is holding the first part of the public hearing on the *Project to modernize the wharfs of the Oka ferry by Traverse Oka inc.* The public hearing will take place at **7:00 p.m. on March 27, 2006** and will be held at **Centre Stephen F. Shaar, located at 394, Main Road in Hudson**. The sessions will continue on the following days, depending on the needs of the public and the commission.

A HEARING IN TWO PARTS**1. Obtaining information**

The public hearing will take place in two parts. In the presence of the proponent and resource persons invited to answer participants' questions, the first part will allow the public and the commission to obtain information about the project in order to learn more about it and examine all its aspects.

2. Voicing opinions

During the second part of the public hearing, which will begin on April 24, 2006, at the same location, the commission will obtain the public's opinion and suggestions. The commission will hear any person, group, organization or municipality wishing to express an opinion on the project, be it in the form of a brief or an oral presentation.

The commission has a maximum period of four months to carry out its mandate. The BAPE report will be submitted to Mr. Claude Béchar, Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, by July 13, 2006 at the latest. Thereafter, the Minister will have 60 days to make the report public.

WHERE CAN THE PROJECT DOCUMENTATION BE CONSULTED?

You can consult the documents pertaining to the project at the BAPE office in Québec, at the Central Library of Université du Québec à Montréal, as well as at the following locations:

- Oka Municipal Library, 183, rue des Anges, Oka;
- War Memorial Library, 60, rue Elm, Hudson.

The documents may also be consulted on the BAPE web site at the following address:
www.bape.gouv.qc.ca.

THE PROJECT

Traverse Oka inc. is proposing the modernization of its two landing wharfs located on both sides of Lac des Deux Montagnes, on the territory of the municipalities of Oka and Hudson. According to the proponent, the project mainly seeks to meet the maritime safety requirements imposed by Transport

Canada and to increase the reliability of the service in order to more adequately respond to the increase in traffic anticipated by the Ministère des Transports du Québec.

The project would entail the construction of fixed wharfs on each shore and a slip way on the Hudson side. The proponent is building these two landing wharfs with a view to accommodating two new self-propelled ferries, each having a capacity of 18 vehicles. These new ferries would replace the current barge system. The landing wharfs would be designed with a gangplank hoisting system. These wharfs would be made of three concrete structures. The first would be the support point for the gangplank on land. The second would support the gangplank hoisting system while serving as a receiving structure for the berthing of the ferry. The third would be a guard pillar located in the water and would be used to stabilize the vessel during boarding and disembarking operations. As for the level of service, the proponent plans to maintain the current capacity but could envisage, only with the agreement of the municipalities of Oka and Hudson, the putting into service of a third ferry. The planned duration of the work is eight weeks.

For more information, you can get in touch with Ms. Anne-Lyne Boutin, coordinator of the commission's secretariat, by dialing 418 643-7447 or toll-free at 1 800 463-4732, extension 420. You can also contact the commission by e-mail at the following address: traverse_oka@bape.gouv.qc.ca.

WHAT IS THE BAPE?

The BAPE is a public information and consultation organization that allows citizens to express their views on a given project and to take part in the decision-making process, which may or may not lead to the authorization of a project. The BAPE carries out the mandates entrusted to it by the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks, notably the public information and consultation mandate lasting 45 days, the public hearing mandate which may last up to 4 months, and the mediation mandate lasting about 2 months.

In response to the requests for a public hearing submitted to the Minister of Sustainable Development, Environment and Parks by citizens, groups, organizations or municipalities, the BAPE has been mandated to hold a public hearing on the *Project to modernize the wharfs of the Oka ferry*.

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