

**PROPOSED MAINTENANCE DREDGING OF THE CHANNEL BETWEEN HUDSON AND
OKA IN LAC DES DEUX-MONTAGNES BY THE MINISTÈRE DES TRANSPORTS**

IT'S INFORMATION TIME

Québec City, January 14 – At the request of the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Greater Montréal, the Environment and Water, André Boisclair, the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE) is making the impact study on the *proposed maintenance dredging of the channel between Hudson and Oka in Lac des Deux-Montagnes by the Ministère des transports du Québec* available to the public.

Public consultation

Beginning today, for the 45-day period January 14 – February 28, 2003, the impact study and the other documents describing the project and its environmental impact can be consulted at the BAPE office in Québec City and at the Université du Québec à Montréal. The complete file is also available at the following locations:

- Oka municipal library, 183, rue des Anges, Oka;
- Municipality of Oka, 183 rue des Anges, Oka;
- Municipality of Hudson, 481, rue Principale, Hudson;
- Kanesatake Mohawk band council, 681, rang Sainte-Philomène, Kanesatake;
- Deux-Montagnes municipal library, 200, rue Henri-Dunant, Deux-Montagnes (for free Internet access only);
- Guy-Bélisle municipal library, 80, rue Arthur Sauvé, Saint-Eustache (for free Internet access only).

Those interested can also consult the BAPE website www.bape.gouv.qc.ca, under the heading “Périodes d'information et de consultation publiques”.

Information meetings

A BAPE representative will head three public information sessions attended by the promoter and the Ministère de l'Environnement. These sessions will take place Tuesday, February 4, 2003, beginning at 7:30 p.m., at the **Hudson community centre**, 394, rue Principale in Hudson, Wednesday, February 5, 2003, beginning at 7:30 p.m., at the **Oka recreational hall**, 174, rue Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Oka, and Thursday, February 6, 2003, beginning at 7:30 p.m., at **Mont La Mennais** (Sweetgrass House room), 664, rang Sainte-Philomène in Kanesatake. Participants will be able to get information on any question related to the project, the impact study or the environmental impact assessment and review procedure.

Public hearing request

Any individual, group or municipality may ask for a public hearing during the information and public consultation period. This request must be forwarded, in writing, no later than **February 28, 2003**, to Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Greater Montréal, the Environment and Water and Government House Leader André Boisclair at 675, boul. René-Lévesque Est, 30^e étage, Québec, G1R 5V7. The party requesting the hearing must state the reasons for the request and his or her interest in the area affected by the project.

Project

To maintain navigation safety and ensure continued ferry service between the north and south shores of Lac des Deux-Montagnes, the Ministère des Transports proposes dredging the Hudson – Oka ferry channel, between Baie de Como and Oka point. The maintenance dredging, which the promoter considers necessary every 15 years, would be done in Lac des Deux-Montagnes in the municipalities of Hudson and Oka. The last dredging dates from 1984.

The project involves dredging an area totalling 36 378 m², which corresponds to a sediment volume of approximately 26 185 m³ in the channel and both extremities. On the Oka side, dredging would be carried out over a length of 90 m, either side of the wharf, and over a width of 100 m. On the Hudson side, it would stretch over a length of 485 m and include two zones: the docking area, which would be dredged over a width of 70 m, and the central channel, which would be dredged over 60 m. Dredging would cover 6 678 m² on the Oka side, representing a sediment volume of 6 710 m³, and 29 700 m² on the Hudson side, representing a sediment volume of 19 475 m³. Almost all sediment would be discharged in an open-water site located downstream of the channel. Only 327 m³ of sediment would be taken from the aquatic environment and disposed of in an appropriate land site.

Work would be carried out in October and November 2003, over a period not exceeding eight weeks. Total project costs are estimated at \$750 000.

Impacts foreseen by promoter and corrective measures proposed in the impact study

In terms of impacts on the physical environment, sediment dredging, transport and discharge in Lac des Deux-Montagnes could increase the water's suspended particle count, thereby altering water quality and disturbing the sector's wildlife populations. The promoter intends to limit sediment dispersion in the aquatic environment by applying corrective measures including use of a watertight clam shell excavator for dredging operations and watertight barges filled to 90% capacity for sediment transport.

The main impacts on the human environment involve water quality, use of the site for navigation and boating, and the quality of life of those living near the worksites. To maintain water quality, the promoter intends to set up a sediment barrier around the drinking water intake located approximately 1 km upstream of the work area and serving the village of Oka, so as not to run the risk of contamination. According to the Department, the presence of trucks and dredging equipment could jeopardize activities generally carried out around the site. Dredging would also disturb Oka ferry operations and boating traffic for the work's duration. To offset these impacts, among other things, the Department proposes drawing up an agreement between the contractor and the ferry owner in order to keep user disturbances to a minimum. The promoter also plans to post notices in the municipalities of Oka and Hudson and in marinas to inform the local population of the nature and duration of the work. As concerns the noise environment of those living near the worksite, the promoter intends to curtail disturbance caused by dredging equipment by insisting that work is restricted to the period 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., and prohibiting work on Sundays and holidays.

In terms of positive impacts, according to the impact study, maintenance dredging would reinstate optimal ferry navigation and passenger safety conditions. Minor economic spinoffs are also projected for the municipalities of Hudson and Oka.

Those wishing to obtain further information may contact Rosemary Al-Hayek by phone at (418) 643-7447 or 1-800-463-4732 (toll-free) or e-mail at rosemary.al-hayek@bape.gouv.qc.ca