



THE DECIBEL COALITION
Working to create boating decibel limits

NEWS LETTER March 24, 2022

**Call to Action – Let your voice be heard at Transport Canada
on Excessive Boat Motor Noise!**

Hello Decibel Coalition Members and Supporters,

In our January Newsletter we told you to “Get ready to help, but not quite yet “ and that Transport Canada would be launching their Let’s Talk web portal on boat motor muffler and excessive noise. Well they have launched the page and you can find it [here](#)! Now we need your help! Please send in your submission by no later than May 13th when the portal will close.

Thankfully, Transport Canada has recognized that the existing muffler regulation is too difficult and expensive to enforce. The law is rarely enforced anywhere in the country. The current regulation is ineffective and creates frustration for both

enforcement agencies and affected communities alike. This situation has allowed the problem to continue to grow unchecked!

Let's Talk – What they are asking

Let's Talk is Transport Canada's public forum and feedback process for regulatory change. The portal includes a summary of the issue and the regulatory options for discussion. They are seeking comments from lake associations, marine enforcement agencies, industry and academics.

Transport Canada has laid out five proposed options for addressing the issue of excessive boat motor noise or "small vessel noise emissions" as they refer to it. Our preferred solution - and the only approach that will truly enable the problem to be dealt with - is "**Option 5**": introduce performance standards, i.e. decibel limits, for manufacturers, importers and vessel operators to follow. This would update the *Small Vessel Regulations* to require manufacturers, importers and operators to ensure their vessels don't exceed defined, objective noise-emission levels.

With these enhancements in place enforcement agencies will have a low cost, easily enforced process for measuring noise levels based on internationally recognized standards which will result in quieter waterways for everyone. And the government will be viewed as repairing a very poor regulation that has been in place for about 20 years!

How Can Your Organization Help?

We need you to submit your comments and support via the [Let's Talk portal](#) supporting Option 5. We would like you to answer questions 1 through 5. However, the most relevant and important question is number 5. Question 6 is optional. You will be required to register before answering. To facilitate your submission, we have attached a template response which addresses the six questions posed by Transport Canada.

It is IMPORTANT that you tailor the template response to reflect the specific issues and sentiments of your members. It is better that Transport Canada receive unique, independent comments. There is no need to reference the Decibel Coalition. Also, we know there are other issues such as loud stereo on boats. Please keep your comments to the issue of "small vessel noise emissions" as unnecessary information will distract from our goal of decibel limits for motors.

The consultation is open until May 13, 2022. However, we ask that you submit your supportive comments to Transport Canada as soon as possible, ideally before April 15th.

As we talked about in January's newsletter, we will be asking you again for help in the coming weeks, this time from your members, as we ramp up the political pressure.

With your organization's support, we have made tremendous progress on this issue over the past 2 years. Now is the moment to show Transport Canada that this issue is national, pervasive and getting worse each year. I hope we can count on your support and your participation in the Let's Talk platform

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions at all.
Here is the link again to submit your response.

[Let's Talk portal](#)

Best regards,



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Recommended Answers to Let's Talk Questions 1-6

Question 1: What do you think about not making any changes, and not further addressing small vessel noise emissions?

- The status quo is untenable, whereas it allows vessels to continue to be built and operate at excessive noise levels
- Lake environments and communities have a right to be undisturbed by excessive noise
- Police must be given the right enforcement tools to ensure regulation compliance

Question 2: What do you think about updating and changing the Small Vessel Regulations' definition of a "muffler"?

- Simply modifying the definitions of a muffler will not make enforcement easier. Courts require expert opinions on mechanical matters and training enforcement officers to become experts on marine mufflers is impractical and costly both at time of the offence and in court.
- Failure to include performance standards would mean that vessels could comply with regulations but still produce excessive noise
- Solely updating the definition of "muffler" would fail taking into consideration future technologies that could address engine noise

Question 3: What do you think about introducing performance standards for manufacturers to follow? These standards would make sure new vessels are tested to confirm that they don't exceed certain decibel limits.

- Performance standards for manufacturers and importer will ensure that all new boats will comply with decibel limits.
- They will ensure that boat buyers can be confident that the newly purchased boats are compliant with the regulations
- A lack of performance standards for manufacturers and importers would create a double standard in the market place.
- Only when coupled with performance standards for vessel operators would they ensure that all vessels, new and existing, will be compliant with decibel limits.
- Compliance by manufacturers and importers is relatively easy as they must already comply with many standards for construction, safety and the environment. The same goes for enforcement by Transport Canada.

Question 4: What do you think about introducing performance standards for vessel operators to follow? These standards would make sure vessels already in operation don't exceed certain decibel limits.

- Objective, measurable performance standards for vessel operators will ensure that all existing vessels will be compliant with decibel limits. However, they must be accompanied by performance standards on manufacturers and importers or the onus to comply will be completely and unfairly on the operators
- With the right measurement tools and efficient and effective enforcement procedures, police will have a low cost method to enforce the regulations

Question 5: What do you think about introducing performance standards for manufacturers, importers and vessel operators to follow? These standards would make sure vessels don't exceed certain decibel limits.

- This is the only proposal that can realistically address excessive boat motor noise levels for both new and existing vessels.
- They must be accompanied by internationally recognized decibel limits and efficient and effective enforcement procedures
- Performance standards for manufacturers, importers and vessel operators will create clear, easy to understand, objective standards with decibel limits consistent with the USA and the EU.
- Compliance costs for manufacturers and importers are minimal
- Enforcement costs are low and are much lower than the current the regulations

Question 6: Are there any other steps you think should be taken to address vessel engine noise emissions?

- As high horsepower outboards continue to be introduced to the market many manufacturers are moving from inboard stern drive engines to outboards often with more than one engine. This can raise the issue that outboards may exceed sound emission levels.
- The regulations that exempt outboards and through the propeller exhausts from having a muffler could lead to confusion that outboards are exempt from the performance standards. Outboards and all engines with through the propeller exhaust systems must also meet the sound level emissions performance standards.

Decibel Coalition Members



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Association of SUMMER VILLAGES OF ALBERTA





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