**Comments to MNRF**

**Executive Summary:**

The “floating accommodation” and “float homes” designations referenced in the proposed amendments are only applicable if MNRF defines the terms in a way that aligns with Transport Canada’s designations.

As the problematic “floating accommodation” structures are presently designated as a “vessel” by Transport Canada, and as the proposed amendment does not apply to any structure designated as a “vessel”, we respectfully submit that the amendment needs to use different language and collaborate with Transport Canada to redefine the problematic structures in the same way that Transport Canada has done in BC since 2001, as that would enable desirable restrictions upon these structures to be put in place without impacting existing traditional use of waterways by floating crafts that are actually “vessels” – and not floating dwellings.

The primary difference in the definitions is that “Live aboard Vessels” are primarily designed for navigation, and that “Float Homes” are not primarily designed for navigation – but rather to serve as a dwelling.

The Gloucester Pool Cottagers’ Association specific suggestions follow

1. We would ask that MNRF adopt Transport Canada’s “Standards and Definitions for Float Homes and Live-Aboard Vessels” that has governed similar structures in the Port of Victoria in B.C. since November 2001: (visible here: <https://gvha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Standards-for-Float-Homes-and-Live-Aboard-Vessels-in-Victoria-Harbour.pdf>)

These regulations define a “**Float** **Home**” as follows: “means a structure incorporating a flotation system, intended for use or being used or occupied for residential purposes, containing one *Dwelling Unit* only, **not primarily intended for or useable in navigation,** and does not include a water craft designed or **intended for navigation** (hereinafter “Float Home”)

They define a “**Live-Aboard Vessel**” to mean “a vessel licensed or registered by Transport Canada as **suitable for navigation** which serves as a residence of its *Owner”* (hereinafter the “Live-Aboard Vessel”– or “BCLAV”)

1. We call upon MNRF to advocate with Transport Canada to rescind the “vessel” designation previously afforded to the structures which meet the definition above, and formally re-designate them to be ‘Float Homes’ as defined in Transport Canada’s definition referenced above.
2. We call upon MNRF to create an enforcement plan and accompanying legislation incorporating the significant penalties necessary to deter users from violating the Public Lands Act while incentivizing police to actively and consistently enforce said legislation.
3. We ask MNRF to develop policies and regulations designed to keep these “Float Homes” safely moored at shoreline locations, where they can benefit from services such as water, sewage, hydro and garbage disposal.
4. We ask MNRF to ensure that construction and operation of “Float Homes” meets usual municipal building codes, easily enforced restrictions on sewage inspection and discharge, and creates the potential for municipalities to apply taxes to “Float Homes” to pay for the services provided in the same way that cottagers and other residents of the municipality do.

**In the alternative, if “Float Homes” are to continue to be allowed to “Camp”**

1. We ask that the number of days for on-water camping in one site without moving be changed from 21 days to 10 days. We note that other provinces presently set limits from 7 to 14 days, and lowering the number of days would align with other provinces and allow for more Ontarians to camp on the water, and should not unreasonably impact the operators of Live-Aboard Vessels.
2. We ask that the movement required of a “Live-Aboard Vessel” / camping unit” when not in a marina, be increased from 100 m to 1 km.

In many municipalities the area around Crown land has been designated as environmentally sensitive, and moving only 100 m will cause detrimental effects to the environment. Moving 1 km will reduce the impacts of prolonged anchoring in one vicinity to the environment.

1. We ask that the MNRF add new conditions that prohibit camping on water within 300 meters of a developed shoreline.

We note that members of our group have noted and often have photographic evidence of areas where “Float Homes” have gathered very close to developed shorelines and we have witnessed such “campers”

1. frequently deliberately depositing their garbage in the lake or allowing it to fall overboard,
2. violating alcohol and cannabis use laws
3. creating noise issues, and
4. urinating from boats.

We have been concerned about the physical damage that they are doing to sensitive shorelines and shallow waters, particularly during the mating and breeding seasons of at risk species, as well as other environmental damage and effects on the nearby water quality. We urge the MNRF to significantly increase fines for “campers” who carelessly or deliberately foul the water.

**9.** Most importantly, we ask that the MNRF specifically ban the use of “spuds” (steel posts) attached to vessels being lowered to the waterbed, other than within a marina.