



Thank you for your interest in the Decibel Coalition. Following is a general description of our organization.

### **Formation**

In the fall of 2019, *Safe Quiet Lakes (SQL)* – a volunteer organization based in Ontario, whose objective is to ensure the sustainable enjoyment of the Muskoka lakes through education and advocacy [www.safequiet.ca](http://www.safequiet.ca) - formed the “**Decibel Coalition**”. Decibel Coalition’s objective is to establish a broad national coalition to lobby the Federal government to enhance the existing Canada Shipping Act Small Vessel Regulations (SOR/2010-91). We want the regulations to include performance standards for boat mufflers set in decibel limits, supported by efficient, effective enforcement procedures. This will bring Canada in line with 27 states in the US and the EU where the decibel-limit law has proven highly successful. It will give on-the-water enforcement officers the tools they need to deal with excessively noisy motor boats. The Decibel Coalition is run by a committee that meets every 2 weeks. SQL has a full-time staff that works 4 days a week, who provide support to the Decibel Coalition. We mean business!! Having said that, patience is a virtue: it is expected to take 2-3 years to have the enhanced legislation in place.

### **Excessive Boat Motor Noise is a Problem**

Excessive boat motor noise is a persistent, pervasive and growing problem on Canada’s lakes and rivers. From Lake Memphremagog in Quebec, through cottage country in Ontario, Wabamun Lake and North Saskatchewan River in Alberta and out to Lake Cowichan, Shawnigan Lake, Windermere Lake and Lakes Okanagan and Shuswap in BC, the increase in the number of high performance boats with illegal or non-existent muffler systems is spoiling the enjoyment of our on-the-water and beach activities, and is diminishing the outdoors/cottage experience.

Our recent conversations with many lake-centric groups in BC and Western Canada have confirmed they are fed up with excessively noisy motor boats.

As you may know, jurisdiction over Canada’s waterways is solely with the Federal government. Provincial and municipal governments are without means. The Federal Small Vessel Regulations require most boats to have a working muffler. But the definition of “muffler” is difficult to apply and police agencies have stopped enforcing it. The regulations do require muffler diverters (aka muffler system bypass) to be visibly disengaged so that they cannot be used while operating the boat. Sanctioned races, boats built before Jan 1, 1980 and boats operating >5 nautical miles from shore are exempt from having mufflers.

### **Our Challenge**

Decibel Coalition’s challenge is to demonstrate to Transport Canada there is across-Canada support for dealing with excessively noisy motor boats

### **Progress to Date**

A year and a quarter has passed since the Decibel Coalition was formed; we now have over 25 lake associations as members in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and BC, representing over 36,000 families. In addition, several Ontario municipalities have recently joined.

We have committee members in BC to cover the Western provinces and a member in Quebec who is expanding our membership of lake associations and municipal governments in that province. We have excellent relationships with the Ontario Provincial Police, various municipal councils in Muskoka, Transport Canada and a good working relationship with the National Marine Manufacturers Association. We soon hope to be in discussions with the BC and Alberta RCMP to bring them on board and gain their commitment to delivering an effective enforcement program when the enhanced legislation comes into effect.

### **Transport Canada Is Open for Discussion**

Most importantly, Transport Canada made a presentation at the April/21 Canadian Marine Advisory Council regarding boat motor noise, and have begun to identify “possible options for the future”. They recognize that the current regulations governing boat motor noise are not effective.

### **Summary**

We believe that enhancing the Small Vessel Regulations to include decibel limit-based performance standards for boat mufflers is achievable and in sight. Enforcement agencies such as the RCMP and OPP will welcome these expanded regulatory tools to help reduce excessive boat motor noise on our waterways.

Together we can make our waterways more enjoyable for all. For more information visit: [Decibel Coalition – Safe Quiet Lakes](#)

If you have any questions or would like to join Decibel Coalition, please contact:

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