MAY 02 2019

Mr. Richard Denis
Interim Clerk of the Senate
Senate
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Denis:

Pursuant to Rule 12-24(3) of the Senate, on behalf of the Government of Canada, I have the
honour to table in both official languages, copies of the Government Response to the Report
of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans entitled When Every Minute Counts -
Maritime Search and Rescue.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

Attachment
MAY 0 2 2019

Honourable Fabian Manning
Chair
Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, ON

Dear Honourable Senator Manning:

On behalf of the Government of Canada, we would like to thank the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (the Committee) for its Report, When Every Minute Counts - Maritime Search and Rescue. The Government is pleased to receive the Committee's recommendations and thanks the Committee for its time and effort in completing this extensive analysis of Canada's maritime search and rescue system.

It is evident by the breadth and depth of the Report's analysis that the Committee is passionate about maritime search and rescue and considers it a high priority. The Government recognizes and appreciates this level of interest, and assures the Committee that the Government considers maritime search and rescue a high priority.

The Report provides an excellent overview of Canada's maritime search and rescue system, while assessing and summarizing many of the long-standing challenges faced by search and rescue partners. The Report also offers valuable insight regarding improvements to Canada's maritime search and rescue system, which the Government will consider as we move forward with planned and future marine safety initiatives.

Overall, the Government of Canada supports the Committee's Report and has considered many of the same issues raised through the Committee's recommendations. Over the course of the Senate's study, the Government has incorporated common themes from witnesses and testimonies, in its work to advance marine safety initiatives. This real-time awareness of issues would not have been possible without the Committee's study. In fact, the Government has begun taking action to address many of the Report's recommendations and findings through initiatives which are being advanced by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, Transport Canada, the Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces, and Public Safety.

Canada
Canada's search and rescue system is a cooperative effort shared by federal, provincial and territorial, municipal governments, volunteers, and Indigenous and coastal communities. As such, the Government agrees that actions taken to improve the system should be developed in partnership with the various search and rescue partners.

On October 24, 2018, the Coast Guard announced the creation of a stand-alone Arctic Region, which is being developed in partnership with Indigenous organizations and Northern Governments. The region, led by an Assistant Commissioner based in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, is being established in partnership with Arctic leaders in an effort to strengthen marine services in Canada's North.

The Committee's Report highlights that the Arctic should be an area of focus for marine safety advancements. The Government agrees with this focus, and will continue to implement initiatives in support of improved marine safety in the Arctic including the Indigenous Community-Boat Volunteer Pilot project and the establishment of a Canadian Coast Guard Arctic Auxiliary Chapter. Through the Oceans Protection Plan, the Coast Guard established a seasonal in-shore rescue boat station in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, in 2018, employing Inuit students while providing dedicated maritime search and rescue services in that region.

Several of the themes raised in the Committee's Report are aligned with Canada's Oceans Protection Plan - an ambitious $1.5 billion dollar investment aimed at strengthening Canada's marine safety system. These initiatives are being implemented to improve maritime search and rescue delivery in Canada, including: the re-establishment of the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John’s, Newfoundland and Labrador; adding emergency tow capacity to the Coast Guard's fleet; establishing seven new Coast Guard search and rescue stations to increase maritime response capacity; and increasing training and exercises for the Coast Guard and for its partners.

More broadly, the Oceans Protection Plan is advancing marine safety, security, and environmental protection far beyond just search and rescue-specific initiatives. Investment under the Plan are increasing the sharing of marine traffic information with local communities in near real time; making navigation safer by providing modern hydrography and charting in key areas of high traffic; improving marine traffic monitoring by establishing new radar sites in strategic locations; and introduces legislation and other measures related to wrecked, abandoned and hazardous vessels to enforce the polluter pays principle.

The Government's commitment under Canada's Defence Policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged will improve the Canadian Armed Forces' capabilities, including search and rescue initiatives. This includes commitments toward investing in fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft, as well as in other assets that would provide additional support to search and rescue, as required.

The attached table outlines the Government's Response to each recommendation.
In closing, on behalf of the Government, we thank the Committee for its time, diligence, and commitment to improving marine safety in Canada.

Jonathan Wilkinson, P.C., M.P.

Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Transport

Harjit Singh Sajjan, P.C., M.P.
Minister of National Defence
1. a) The committee recommends that the Canadian Coast Guard establish additional primary search and rescue stations in the Canadian Arctic to meet the growing demand in areas where marine activity is forecasted to increase.

   b) The committee also recommends that the final decision on the location of these search and rescue stations be made in consultation with local communities.

   **Response:** The Government agrees with this recommendation in principle and is committed to providing robust search and rescue services in Canada's Arctic, informed by region-specific maritime risks and local knowledge.

   On October 24, 2018, the Coast Guard announced the creation of stand-alone Arctic Region, which is being developed in partnership with Indigenous organizations and Northern Governments. The creation of Coast Guard's new Arctic Region will be implemented in phases and has already begun with the hiring of a new Assistant Commissioner who is based in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The region will work collaboratively with Indigenous peoples, provinces and territories, and Northern communities to define the borders of the new region and its activities.

   The new Arctic Region exemplifies the Coast Guard's commitment to advancing reconciliation and pursuing a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples which is based on the recognition of rights, respect, co-operation, and partnership. This will enable the Coast Guard to work collaboratively with Indigenous leaders, organizations, stakeholders, and governments on innovative approaches to program and service delivery.

   Under Canada's Oceans Protection Plan, the Government established a Coast Guard in-shore rescue boat station in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, in 2018. This station employs Inuit students to provide dedicated maritime search and rescue services in this region. Consultations with local communities conducted through Coast Guard's pilot implementation of the Risk-based Analysis of Maritime Search and Rescue Delivery (RAMSARD) methodology were the basis for determining the best location for this unit. The RAMSARD process, which informs the best service delivery model for each search and rescue area, includes two phases of consultations with local residents, stakeholders and partners.

2. a) The committee recommends that the Canadian Coast Guard establish the Coastal Nations Search and Rescue Course as a permanent training program at its Rigid Hull Inflatable Operator Training School in Bamfield, British Columbia.

   b) The committee also recommends that the Canadian Coast Guard, in consultation with stakeholders, expand this course to other coastal and Indigenous communities, particularly in the Canadian Arctic.
Response: The Government supports this recommendation and frequently considers opportunities to enhance marine safety training, particularly in rural coastal areas where there is a history of local communities participating in maritime search and rescue responses. The coastal nations search and rescue course is currently being delivered by the Coast Guard under the Oceans Protection Plan through the Indigenous Community Response Training initiative. This initiative provides educational courses and hands-on training to Indigenous peoples from coastal communities in British Columbia, covering topics such as marine search and rescue, environmental response and incident management.

Although the Oceans Protection Plan is scheduled to conclude in 2022, the Coast Guard will continue to provide ongoing training to Indigenous and coastal communities in British Columbia. This training would include the coastal nations search and rescue course or similar advanced search and rescue training courses. To date, the coastal nations search and rescue course has been provided at Coast Guard's Rigid Hull Inflatable Operator Training School in Bamfield, British Columbia; however, other training facilities may be used in the future.

Since 2015, the Coast Guard has been supporting its partners in the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary with their marine safety training efforts in the Arctic, and engagement with Indigenous communities interested in participating in the Auxiliary program to ensure they are trained to meet the Auxiliary's standards for vessel operations and search and rescue. The Coast Guard's training and exercise teams were present for all training delivered to Arctic communities last year, on-water and classroom. The Coast Guard had two rotating teams that traveled the north with the Auxiliary and provided training to communities establishing Auxiliary units.

3

a) The committee recommends that the Canadian Coast Guard, in collaboration with the Canadian Coast Guard College, expand and intensify its human resource recruitment strategy to target a broader audience.

b) The committee recommends that the strategy have a particular focus on attracting and retaining Indigenous cadets and employees within the Canadian Coast Guard organization.

c) The committee recommends that Indigenous employees proficient in Inuktitut be recruited by the Canadian Coast Guard in the Canadian Arctic.

Response: The Government supports this recommendation and the Coast Guard has already made progress in this area. In 2018, the Coast Guard created a National Recruitment Working Group to strengthen its recruitment efforts focusing on Indigenous peoples, veterans, members of visible minority groups, women, French-speaking Canadians, and youth. In addition, the Canadian Coast Guard College has developed an Officer Training Program Recruitment Strategy aimed at increasing the number of qualified recruits for the program to align with the targeted demographic groups listed above.
Canada has the longest coastline in the world, which is home to many Indigenous communities. Working in partnership with Indigenous peoples from these areas who have lived on and by the coasts for millennia brings a more comprehensive perspective to the work of coastal co-management and marine safety. Indigenous peoples are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population, with a large number of the population being under the age of 25. The Coast Guard works with Indigenous communities and partners every day on every coast and efforts are underway to recruit Inuktitut speakers into the Department. Inuktitut speakers are employed seasonally with the new in-shore rescue boat station in Rankin Inlet, and additional employment opportunities are forthcoming as part of Coast Guard's new Arctic Region, with preference given to Inuktitut speakers during the hiring process.

The committee recommends that the Canadian Armed Forces seize the opportunity afforded by the Defence Investment Plan 2018 to increase and diversify its search and rescue workforce to respond to the increased demand for search and rescue.

Response: The Government agrees in principle with this recommendation. As all Canadian Armed Forces assets can be called upon to support search and rescue activities, efforts to diversify and increase the size of the Canadian Armed Forces will have important benefits for the search and rescue mandate. Canada's Defence Policy: Strong, Secure, Engaged commits to increasing and diversifying the Canadian Armed Forces, which will help ensure it can continue to fulfill its search and rescue mandate now and into the future. This commitment includes growing the Regular Force by 3,500 and the Reserve Force by 1,500. In addition, over the next five years, the Royal Canadian Air Force is looking at enhancing its capacity to train search and rescue technicians. More broadly, Canada's Defence Policy's unprecedented focus on diversity will also strengthen the Canadian Armed Forces' ability to deliver on its mandate. It includes commitments to integrate Gender-Based Analysis perspectives into policies, projects, and programs, to increase the proportion of women, and to focus on recruiting and retaining under-represented populations such as visible minorities and Indigenous peoples. This will apply to recruitment for the search and rescue workforce, as well as for other positions such as the Canadian Rangers, who often provide support for search and rescue. The Canadian Rangers' extensive understanding of their local environment provides invaluable support to ground search and rescue in the more sparsely settled regions of Canada.

The committee recommends that, as a pilot project, the Department of National Defence authorize a civilian helicopter operator to provide aeronautical search and rescue coverage in the Canadian Arctic and in Newfoundland and Labrador. The assessment of the pilot project, including its costs and benefits, should be made public.

Response: At this time the Government is not considering a pilot project that would contract a dedicated civilian helicopter to provide aeronautical search and rescue in the Canadian Arctic and in Newfoundland and Labrador. To deliver on its mandate, including for search and rescue, the Canadian Armed Forces rely on specialized equipment and highly trained personnel. Commitments outlined in Canada's Defence Policy: Strong, Secure, Engaged, such as fixed-wing search and rescue aircraft, will
further improve the Canadian Armed Forces search and rescue capabilities. Investments in other assets that are not specific to search and rescue, including Arctic and offshore patrol ships, will also help provide additional search and rescue support. These ships will allow the Royal Canadian Navy to operate even farther within Canada's northern maritime environment and contribute to search and rescue operations, as required.

To better meet the needs of local and regional search and rescue, the Government also regularly engages other levels of government and civilian organizations, as appropriate. This includes aligning the Canadian Armed Forces response posture and pre-deploying assets to synchronize with activities that have greater potential for search and rescue incidents, such as lobster fishing season openings in the Maritimes. The Canadian Armed Forces also regularly complements its search and rescue response with chartered civilian aircraft and helicopters, when required.

The committee recommends that the National Arctic Search and Rescue Roundtable be reinstituted as soon as possible and that similar roundtables be created in other search and rescue regions to help address regional and local issues.

**Response:** The Government recognizes the value in analysing regionally-specific search and rescue issues, and will continue to explore options to strengthen national search and rescue policy and governance but cannot commit to reinstating the National Arctic Search and Rescue Roundtable at this time. Public Safety and the broader search and rescue community are committed to working collaboratively to advance search and rescue issues through a number of mechanisms inclusive of Northern and coastal community participation. These forums allow Canada's search and rescue community to examine search and rescue policy and program matters, and provide strategic advice and recommendations to senior officials in federal, provincial, and territorial governments. For example:

- **The Volunteer Search and Rescue Council,** established in 2016, is a consolidated body that consists of the leadership from the Search and Rescue Volunteer Association of Canada, Civil Air Search and Rescue Association and Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary. The Volunteer Search and Rescue Council works with federal and provincial/territorial search and rescue authorities to improve and sustain volunteer search and rescue capabilities across Canada, including in Northern and remote communities.

- **The National Search and Rescue Advisory Council** was established in 2017, as a collaborative body of search and rescue partners to serve as a voice for the entirety of Canada's search and rescue community by examining search and rescue policy and program matters, and providing strategic advice and recommendations to senior officials in federal and provincial/territorial Governments.

- **The Interdepartmental Committee on Search and Rescue** is a senior-level federal committee consisting of federal departments with search and rescue responsibilities. This committee meets regularly to identify and address national
search and rescue priorities, including considerations for search and rescue prevention and response in Northern and remote communities.

- **Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management** is a senior-level federal/provincial/territorial committee that works to harmonize and improve emergency management practices across Canada, and is the principle federal/provincial/territorial body for search and rescue in Canada and works in tandem with the Interdepartmental Committee on search and rescue to identify and address national search and rescue priorities.

- The **Ground Search and Rescue Council of Canada** is a coordinating body that represents federal/provincial/territorial search and rescue authorities as well as national organizations with an operational or policy role in the delivery of ground search and rescue services. This council advises the Senior Officials Responsible for Emergency Management on ground search and rescue matters and initiatives across Canada, including in Northern communities and remote areas.

| 7 | The committee recommends that the Canadian Coast Guard increase the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary’s funding in order to, at a minimum offset higher operational expenses, and to ensure that Auxiliary members maintain training in accordance with the national competency standards. |

**Response:** The Government supports this recommendation in principle and is committed to supporting search and rescue partners, including the Auxiliary. Volunteer search and rescue organizations provide valuable support to Canada’s search and rescue system, and the Auxiliary responds to approximately one quarter of maritime distress calls.

The Auxiliary's overall funding envelope has increased by more than 50 percent between 2015 and 2018, from $SM/year to $7.6M/year. This is demonstrative of the Government’s support of this important volunteer organization. These investments, such as the Indigenous Community-Boat Volunteer Pilot project, have allowed the Auxiliary to increase its membership in under-represented areas such as remote coastal and Indigenous communities in the Arctic and in British Columbia. All investments include funding to support participation in search and rescue operations and training activities.

| 8 | The committee recommends that the Canadian Coast Guard establish a Maritime Search and Rescue Fund to support the purchase of equipment and services needed by regional Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary organizations. |

**Response:** The Government agrees with this recommendation in principle given the immense value volunteer organizations provide in responding to search and rescue incidents in Canada. Accordingly, the Coast Guard is in the process of examining options to increase the scope of the Auxiliary program’s eligible expenditures to allow greater flexibility in addressing equipment requirements, as well as vessel maintenance and replacement.

Historically, the Coast Guard has not funded the Auxiliary to purchase vessels or equipment, as the intent of the Auxiliary program is to attract experienced mariners to support search and rescue in Canada. However, with some regional Auxiliary...
organizations shifting to a community-based approach to search and rescue, the Coast Guard understands that the needs of these organizations are evolving and is working to address these changes.

Through Canada's Oceans Protection Plan, the Indigenous Community-Boat Volunteer Pilot project offers Indigenous coastal communities a process to apply for funding to purchase a search and rescue-capable vessel and/or equipment required to join the Auxiliary. While this pilot project is currently scheduled to conclude in 2022, the increased Auxiliary funding to support this work, and the new members brought onboard, is ongoing.

The Government provides search and rescue organizations, such as the Auxiliary, opportunities to apply for contribution funding through Public Safety's Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund. The Coast Guard frequently supports the Auxiliary's submissions of funding proposals for search and rescue expenditures not funded through the Coast Guard's existing Auxiliary agreements.

9 The committee recommends that the Canadian Coast Guard assist regional Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary organizations to diversify their funding sources.

**Response:** The Government agrees with this recommendation in principle and supports Auxiliary organizations in their endeavours to diversify funding sources. Auxiliary organizations are encouraged and supported by the Coast Guard in their efforts to fundraise. These efforts are an allowable expense under the Auxiliary funding agreements. The Coast Guard raises the Auxiliary's profile by including them in: multi-agency exercises; our media campaigns; and recognizing their efforts at public award ceremonies. The Coast Guard regularly supports applications by the Auxiliary for contribution funds to Public Safety's Search and Rescue New Initiatives Fund by providing letters of support and supplementary information and analysis to support their proposals.

While the Government cannot dictate or manage the business of a transfer payment recipient, the Coast Guard regularly explores options for assisting the Auxiliary in developing public-private partnerships, as well as accessing funding opportunities from other government departments.

10 The committee recommends that the Canadian Coast Guard establish additional Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary units in the Arctic Region, with funding dedicated to recruitment, operations, equipment, training, and where appropriate, vessels.

**Response:** The Government agrees with this recommendation, and the Coast Guard has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring a strong Auxiliary presence in the Arctic. For example, in 2015, the Coast Guard launched a project to assess marine risks and increase Auxiliary membership in the Arctic, and provides $1.1M/year in dedicated, ongoing funding.

In addition, $1M/year is available through the four-year Indigenous Community-Boat Volunteer Pilot project, until 2021, to Arctic communities interested in joining the Auxiliary. Specifically, this funding supports Arctic communities' ability to purchase a...
search and rescue-capable vessel and/or equipment required to join the Auxiliary. The Indigenous Community-Boat Volunteer Pilot project invested $IM in Arctic communities last year, and plans to invest more than $1.5M this year, totaling more than $2.5M for the acquisition of search and rescue and vessels and equipment.

11 The committee recommends that Transpo1i Canada amend its regulations to extend the mandatory use of emergency position-indicating radio beacons (or EPIRBs) to vessels in all fishing fleets. A timeline of two years should be given to the fishing industry to achieve mandatory EPIRB cani age.

**Response:** The Government supports and has taken steps to address this recommendation. On July 13, 2017, the *Fishing Vessel Safety Regulations* came into force and extended the carriage requirements for emergency position-indicating radio beacons (EPIRB) to fishing vessels that are more than 12 metres, operating less than 25 nautical miles from shore. This requirement is estimated to extend the carriage requirements to an additional 20 percent of the small fishing fleet.

The amended *Navigation Safety Regulations* are planned for publication in the Canadian Gazette Part 1 in spring/summer 2019. The amendments, if approved, would consolidate ten existing regulations related to navigation safety and radio communication into one comprehensive regulation. Under this regulatory initiative, Transport Canada is proposing additional distress signaling device carriage requirements of float-free 406 MHz EPIRBs onboard all commercial vessels, including fishing vessels that are more than 15 gross tonnes (12 metres in length or more) when operating beyond sheltered waters. For vessels that are less than 15 gross tonnes (less than 12 m) operating on Near Coastal, Class 2 voyages, the proposed regulations provide vessels with an option to carry any of the following:

- a float-free EPIRB;
- a manually-activated EPIRB;
- a 406 MHz personal locator beacon; and,
- a portable VHF-DSC/GPS radio.

12 The committee recommends that Transpo1i Canada develop and disseminate user-friendly information regarding vessel stability to reduce unsafe practices in the commercial fishing industry.

**Response:** The Government supports this recommendation and safer vessel stability practices. As such, Transport Canada has already taken action that aligns with this recommendation. On October 19, 2018, Transport Canada published TP 15393E-*Adequate stability and safety guidelines for fishing vessels*; ([http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/adequate-stability-safety-guidelines-fishing-vessels. html](http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/adequate-stability-safety-guidelines-fishing-vessels.html)). These guidelines are intended to support fishing vessel owners and operators on how to take preventative measures to maintain their vessel's stability and provide guidance on best operational practices to avoid a swamping or capsizing of their fishing vessel.

At the same time, Transport Canada also published TP 15392E-*Guidelines for Fishing Vessel Major Modifications or a Change in Activity*...
These guidelines are also intended to support fishing vessel owners and operators in understanding if their vessel has adequate stability and if not, informs them of proper steps to take to correct any issues.

Both of these guidelines are available on the Transport Canada Marine Safety Publications webpage and the Transport Canada Small Fishing Vessel Safety webpage.

Further, Transport Canada revised its Ship Safety Bulletin 01/2008 - "Fishing Vessel Safety: Record of Modifications." This bulletin was updated to include emphasis on the importance of having accurate stability information and up-to-date operational procedures when modifications to the vessel are made, while also stressing the importance of obtaining stability notices. This bulletin is currently in its final publication phase and is expected to be publicly available in winter 2019. 

The committee recommends that Fisheries and Oceans Canada ensure that its regulations and practices give priority to fish harvester safety.

**Response:** The Government agrees with this recommendation in principle and remains committed to the safety of all mariners in Canadian waters. Transport Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Coast Guard signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Safety at Sea for Commercial Harvesters in 2006, which provides a framework for cooperation between the departments with regards to promoting the safety at sea of fish harvesters.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada developed a Safety at Sea Action Plan, which includes a wide range of shorter and longer-term deliverables to ensure the department meets the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding. This includes working with Transport Canada and Coast Guard partners and other stakeholders to advance regulatory and policy initiatives that support the safety at sea of commercial fish harvesters. The Safety of Sea Action Plan serves as a key tool to maintain focus on safety at sea in broad areas of governance, engagement, information, regulation, and policy. As an evergreen document, it will continue to prioritize and drive departmental initiatives that promote the safety of harvesters. For example, Fisheries and Oceans Canada is currently advancing regulatory amendments in support of professional certification in the fishing industry including safety training, and is strengthening safety at sea information in Fisheries and Oceans Canada's Integrated Fisheries Management Plans.

The committee recommends that, through the Canadian Marine Advisory Council, Transport Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Canadian Coast Guard work with fishery safety organizations and fish harvesters to develop a national action plan on safety in the commercial fishing industry. This action plan should be provided to the Committee within three years of the tabling of this report in the Senate of Canada.

Transport Canada will leverage the Canadian Marine Advisory Council to collaborate with fishery safety organizations and fish harvesters and develop an Action Plan to address safety issues in the commercial fishing industry. This will leverage the work already in place under recent commitments to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and work via the Canadian Marine Advisory Council to provide an Action Plan to the Senate Committee by 2021.

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<td>The committee recommends that Transport Canada transfer the responsibility of search and rescue prevention and recreational boating safety back to the Canadian Coast Guard along with the associated funding.</td>
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**Response:** Working to prevent marine incidents is a core responsibility of Transport Canada, and the Office of Boating Safety is an integral part of fulfilling these responsibilities. These responsibilities were transferred to Transport Canada in 2003, along with all policy and regulatory responsibilities associated with marine safety, ensuring that the Office of Boating Safety continues to focus on both regulations and public education and awareness programs.

The Government agrees that efforts to raise public awareness of boating safety, including prevention-based programs, have a positive impact on the reduction of search and rescue incidents involving recreational boaters.

Under Transport Canada, the mandate of the Office of Boating Safety is being enhanced through partnerships with stakeholders and boating safety organizations. Transport Canada has ongoing funding available to these partners through its Boating Safety Contribution Program, which supports organizations working to raise public safety awareness for recreational boating. Since 2009, the Boating Safety Contribution Program has provided approximately $9 million for 64 recreational boating safety projects, aimed at:

- increasing the number of pleasure craft operators following safe boating practices;
- improving stakeholder capacity to deliver evidence-based awareness initiatives; and
- reducing deaths, injuries and property damages due to boating accidents.

Transport Canada and its partners are expanding recreational boating safety awareness initiatives through a variety of online resources, publications, and boating safety success stories for public consumption. This funding also supports regionally-specific boating safety awareness programs in Canada.
Transport Canada's Safe Boating Guide (http://www.tc.gc.ca/media/documents/marinesafety/tg511e.pdf) is available online and has remained the most downloaded TC publication for the past five years. Transport Canada is expanding the Office of Boating Safety's social media presence to reach a wider audience, and to promote its public awareness initiatives.

16  The committee recommends that the Government of Canada, through the Canadian Coast Guard, and in collaboration with Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary units, local communities, and other partners, increase radio coverage in Canada's Arctic and in other remote communities.

**Response:** The Government agrees with this recommendation in principle and shares the position that increased marine radio coverage can improve marine safety in remote areas, such as in the Canadian Arctic. In September 2018, the Coast Guard produced a report which included the current capabilities and recommended enhancements to Coast Guard's radio communications system. The report did not identify any gaps in Coast Guard's Medium Frequency or High Frequency radio communications coverage in Canada. However, there were two Very High Frequency (Channel 16) areas of interest identified in the Arctic. The Coast Guard will conduct a prioritization exercise as it develops options for enhancing coverage across Canada.

17a  The committee recommends that the Canadian Coast Guard be established as a separate statutory agency reporting to the Minister of Transport.

**Response:** The Coast Guard is a special operating agency within Fisheries and Oceans Canada, which reflects the integral role the Coast Guard plays in delivering on the Department's mandate. As a result of the special operating agency designation, the Department (including the Coast Guard) leverages economies of scale through shared financial, human resource and communication services, allowing the Department and the Coast Guard to focus on delivering services to Canadians. While there are complementarities between Transport Canada and the Coast Guard's mandates, that is also true of the Coast Guard and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Moving the Coast Guard would also not be straightforward given the integration of human resources, information technology, and financial services and would represent a significant expenditure of effort at a time when all departments are working hard to integrate new initiatives such as the Oceans Protection Plan. All of that said, there is always merit to reviewing the logic and efficiency of organizational structures to ensure alignment to Government priorities. Looking forward, this is something that could be considered in the future.

17b  The committee also recommends that capital planning be extended to 20 years to reflect the need for the fleet's renewal, upgrades, and modernization.

**Response:** The Government is committed to ensuring safety in Canadian waters by having a fleet ready to serve on Canada's three coasts and vast inland waterways. The Coast Guard employs robust multi-year planning to support fleet renewal, upgrades, and modernization, and will ensure that the Government has the necessary capabilities to deliver critical on-water services. Fleet renewal efforts are already underway. Since...
| 2015, the Government has procured four search and rescue vessels and delivered on two key commitments made to Canadians—the re-opening of the Kitsilano Coast Guard station in Vancouver, British Columbia, and the Maritime Rescue Sub-Centre in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. As the Coast Guard continues to renew its large and small fleets, the Government is ensuring that Canadians have the right assets to preserve safety in Canadian waters. |