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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 22 September 2005**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Jeudi 22 septembre 2005**

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**Comité permanent des  
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Loi de 2005 modifiant  
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(suspensions de permis)

Chair: Marilyn Churley  
Clerk: Tonia Grannum

Présidente : Marilyn Churley  
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE  
ON REGULATIONS  
AND PRIVATE BILLS**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DES  
RÈGLEMENTS ET DES PROJETS DE LOI  
D'INTÉRÊT PRIVÉ**

Thursday 22 September 2005

Jeudi 22 septembre 2005

*The committee met at 0930 in committee room 1.*

**HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT  
(LICENCE SUSPENSIONS), 2005**

**LOI DE 2005 MODIFIANT  
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE  
(SUSPENSIONS DE PERMIS)**

Consideration of Bill 209, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act with respect to the suspension of drivers' licences / Projet de loi 209, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en ce qui concerne les suspensions de permis de conduire.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Khalil Ramal):** Good morning, everyone. We are here today for Bill 209. Mr. Zimmer is the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. Zimmer, you have 15 minutes to present to the committee. Then we move to the opposition and the government side, and the third party, of course. Mr. Zimmer, you have the floor.

**Mr. David Zimmer (Willowdale):** Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my pleasure and honour to be able to introduce Bill 209, a bill having to do with boat safety and alcohol. The bill is aimed at boat safety and saving lives. This bill is about giving law enforcement the tools to address the problem of drinking and boat operation. It's about ensuring that the millions of tourists and Ontario residents who enjoy boating and water recreational activities can go out on the waterways without having to fear for their lives or safety because of drinking and boating.

We suspend drivers' licences for offences such as non-payment of child support and operation of snowmobiles. There is no reason why we shouldn't do the same for boating offences involving alcohol. We have a responsibility as legislators for boat safety here in Ontario.

Through the hard work of organizations like Mothers Against Drunk Driving, law enforcement agencies, boat operators' associations and cottage associations, the message has been clear: If you drink, don't drive. The message should also be clear: If you boat, don't drink. As well, with respect to the operation of automobiles and alcohol, through various strategic campaigns over the last years—advertisements, RIDE programs, public awareness programs—the culture of Ontario has been changed with respect to impaired driving and the operation of

motor vehicles. But the same hasn't been true of the operation of motorboats and alcohol. This is an area which has long been ignored. Driving an automobile or a snowmobile while impaired has been deemed unacceptable behaviour, but operating a motorboat on our waterways seems to have escaped this type of labelling.

Every boating season there are serious accidents involving alcohol and boating. Lives are lost; people are injured. We have to get the message out that alcohol and boating is no less dangerous than operating a car under the influence of alcohol. Most boaters don't seem to understand the effect of the sun, the wind, the feeling of exhilaration when you're out on the open water in a boat. The attitude that it's acceptable to operate a motor vessel while impaired seems to be prevalent in the boating community.

Over the summer break, I had the opportunity to visit many lakes, marinas, police units, cottage associations and boating associations to get a sense out there "on the water," if you will, what the problem is. I've been to Peel, Bracebridge, Orillia, Lake Couchiching and other waterways. The message out there on the water, to use the expression, is clear: We need to change the culture. We need to change the culture so that everybody has the same sense that you ought not to drive a boat under the influence of alcohol, to get the same idea across that people have that you don't operate a car under the influence of alcohol.

It was amazing. I was out there talking to people, and the same people who would no more, in a million years, get behind the wheel of a car when they were drinking or under the influence of alcohol don't seem to have the same intuitive prohibition in their systems about getting behind the wheel of a boat. That's something that we've got to change.

The OPP marine units keep extensive statistics on alcohol and boating offences. I can tell you that a review of those statistics would indicate that 66% of boaters in a recent Transport Canada report acknowledged that they drink alcohol while boating, and 37% of boaters admit to consuming alcohol on every recreational boat trip. Alcohol is a factor in 40% of recreational boating fatalities. Between April and December 2003, OPP marine units issued 1,923 charges and warnings related to alcohol offences on the waterways. During that same six-month period, 33 impaired boating charges or warnings were

issued. Another 33 Criminal Code charges or warnings involving alcohol and boat use were issued.

The statistics about the dangers of impaired boating are compelling by themselves, but it's quite easy to be detached about the numbers. It's difficult to ignore the personal tragedies faced by families when their loved ones are involved in boating accidents involving alcohol. We're going to hear from a witness, I expect, in a few minutes—Mr. Ken Crompton—who can relate the personal tragedy that always follows from boating accidents involving alcohol. I want to take this moment to recognize Ken Crompton, who has worked with me closely on bringing this bill forward.

So, what will the bill do? Well, the bill will do a couple of things. The premise of the bill is that there shouldn't be a distinction between the impaired driver of an automobile—how they're treated—and the impaired operator of a motorized boat. When an individual chooses to drink and drive any vehicle—an automobile or a boat—they become a weapon: They put their safety at risk; they put the safety of other users of our waterways at risk. In short, what Bill 209 will do, if passed, is it'll amend the Highway Traffic Act so that penalties that apply to individuals convicted of impaired driving of an automobile will also apply to boaters who drive powered motor vessels while impaired.

It's important that there be an effective deterrent that will prevent boaters from drinking in the first place. As well, theoretically, if an individual driving a motor vessel while impaired is brought ashore by the local police—so they've been stopped out there on the water operating a boat under the use of alcohol—there's nothing to prevent them from getting in their car once they're back at shore and driving away. That just doesn't make sense. This bill is about giving law-enforcement authorities the tools to address this problem. It's about ensuring that the millions of tourists and Ontario residents who enjoy our waterways can continue to do so in safety.

So technically, if the bill is passed, this is what'll happen:

1. It would suspend the drivers' licences of individuals convicted of an alcohol-related offence while operating a motor vessel.

2. It would give law enforcement authorities the ability to enact 12-hour driving suspensions if you're stopped out there on the lake and you're involved in an alcohol boating offence. The registrar of motor vehicles would be able to enact an immediate 90-day suspension of your driver's licence.

This legislation is long overdue. It's not the first time it has been introduced. It has been around a few times before as a private member's bill but has died on various order papers. My sense is—speaking to my colleagues and all parties in the Legislature—that it enjoys support from all parties, and there's broad support out there in the community. I was told by one of my researchers this morning that in a recent poll—and I think it just came out yesterday; I don't have the details of the poll other than the conclusion—80% of the folks polled out there in the province support what Bill 209 is trying to achieve.

#### 0940

As a province, we suspend drivers' licences for a variety of things. If you're not up to date on your family support obligations, you can lose your licence. If you're operating a snowmobile under the influence of alcohol, the suspension provisions under the Ontario Highway Traffic Act apply on conviction. If we're telling people that if they get out there and drive a car under the influence of alcohol these penalties relating to their Ontario driver's licence are going to kick in, or if they get out there and are operating a snowmobile these penalties are going to kick in—and that's the law now—why wouldn't we logically extend it to the operation of a motorboat on our waterways?

Just a quick comment about the benefits of the legislation:

In my view, the legislation would offer a substantial deterrent to motorboat operation under the influence of alcohol. From speaking to all the stakeholders out there this summer, and to boat operators themselves, my sense is that they place great, great value on their highway driving privileges. If there was a connection that linked alcohol and boating offences to driving privileges on our highways, it would be a great deterrent. People want that Ontario driver's licence, and if that means they're going to be very careful about drinking and operating boats, that's a good effect.

Obviously, it's going to reduce serious injury and death. As I said earlier, most boating fatalities involve alcohol.

It's revenue-positive, in the sense that the costs incurred with health care, investigations and all the things that follow when there is a serious boating accident will be less.

More importantly, it's another extension of this idea of RIDE programs, Mothers Against Drunk Driving and all the other stakeholders who are trying to cut down on the use of alcohol and vehicle offences. If we extend it to include boats as well as snowmobiles and cars, that's a good thing.

Why should we implement Bill 209? Well, I can tell you that when you dig through the material and the research, there is a correlation: The same kind of person who might operate a car under the influence of alcohol might, even more so, operate a boat under the influence of alcohol.

This is not a bill that's going to require a huge addition of resources. It's not going to require an increase in enforcement officers, crown attorneys or Ministry of Transportation personnel or other bureaucracy to manage. It's all in place. They do it now for snowmobiles and cars; we're just extending the concept.

Importantly, the amendments proposed by Bill 209 do not create a new offence; they just create a new set of penalties.

Any suggestion that this is a revenue grab is not borne out by the facts. This is not about generating revenue; it's about creating the conditions for boat safety.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Zimmer. Now it's time for the opposition. You have five minutes, sir.

**Mr. Gerry Martiniuk (Cambridge):** Thank you, Chair. I won't take that long, for sure.

I'd like to compliment David Zimmer on bringing forth this bill. I, like him, have always been somewhat bemused at the double standard we have in our society where, through the efforts of MADD and many other organizations, we frown on—we more than frown on; we consider impaired driving of a motor vehicle a criminal offence, as boating with a drink is sort of OK.

I compliment you again. I think this bill sends a clear message to those members of our society who think boating and drinking are OK. I think it will have the required effect.

**Ms. Shelley Martel (Nickel Belt):** I will be brief as well. Let me just say, from my perspective and the perspective of the members of the NDP caucus, drinking and driving is a crime. That is the case whether you're operating a motor vehicle, whether you're driving a snowmobile or whether you're driving a motorized boat. The distinction from "vehicle" that now exists in the law is a distinction that has to end. The overwhelming majority of the population does believe that drinking and driving is a crime and want to see tough penalties, tough fines and licences revoked in order to fully change the culture so that it is seen as crime and not as an acceptable part of people's social behaviour.

We are in support of the bill. We trust that it will also act as a deterrent, which may be its most important feature. I hope that this time, because there have been other bills before us, we might actually be able to get this passed.

I would just in closing want to thank Mr. Crompton, who is here today. I saw a copy of the letter that he sent to all three party leaders. It was given to me because I was going to be sitting on this committee. I thank you very much for being here and for sharing your personal story with us. It couldn't have been easy, but there will hopefully be something very positive coming out of what was a great personal tragedy to you and your family.

**The Acting Chair:** Do you wish to answer now or do you want to listen to the witness first, and then we can respond, if you want?

**Mr. Zimmer:** Perhaps we can hear from any delegations or witnesses.

**The Acting Chair:** OK.

#### KEN CROMPTON

**The Acting Chair:** Mr. Ken Crompton, you have 15 minutes. You can go through the presentation for 15 minutes or you can split it 50-50, presentation and answering questions. It's up to you.

**Mr. Ken Crompton:** I'd like to thank the Chair and the committee for the opportunity to speak today. I have a personal story that I believe clearly indicates the need for the changes that are being proposed. I've put something together to give you a little bit of background with respect to my son Pete, but this is one of the situations where, as a parent, it's obviously your worst nightmare.

Pete, at the time of his death, was 27. His death occurred on July 13, 2003, in Lake Joseph. It was essentially daylight at the time of the accident. Pete was a passenger sitting at the stern of the boat. He was accompanied by a number of his friends and, in this case, his brother. Pete was six foot, three inches. He was sitting at the stern in the middle, between two friends, so he had the motor housing directly in front of him. The boat that struck Pete came from the same cottage as Pete's boat. They were simply going out 1,000 feet to watch the sunrise. It was light at the time, but the sun was coming because the cottage was blocked out by the east hill.

Everybody in the boat that Pete was in watched the other boat come. They were expecting it to throttle back; it didn't. When the driver of the boat Pete was in realized that it wasn't going to stop, he hit the throttle and exposed the stern. The offending boat came over the left port at the stern, right over top, and came down on the starboard side.

Pete's two friends, sitting on either side, were able to go along the gunwale between the sides. Pete was trapped. So he gets—excuse me. The hull and the prop hit him, so he died of massive injuries caused by the boat. His friend to his right: As he dived out of the way, the prop crushed his pelvis and broke both tibial plateaus, and he has arch scarring from the top of his back down to his ankles. He is a very resilient individual and he's coming along, but he still has residual problems that are going to be with him for the rest of his life.

#### 0950

Pete was a graduate of Guelph. He was an accomplished athlete. He'd been on the Ontario Ski Team, he was a low-handicap golfer, he sailed, windsurfed and surfed on four continents. At the time of his death, he was an investment property sales representative with CB Richard Ellis, which is the largest North American real estate company.

This has more than an impact on my wife and my son Jeff. There were 1,500 people at Pete's funeral, which attests to his many friendships. You'd appreciate this, Ms. Martel. He was a tree planter for years with his brother. I'm from the north; I'm from Thunder Bay. There's a Web site that his friends set up for him and there are still messages coming in on that Web site today.

In any event, the driver of the boat was charged with eight offences, including three offences relating to impaired driving. After numerous court appearances—and I must commend the police investigation in this case. There were 43 witnesses. The detachment in Parry Sound did a spectacular job, P.C. Nicksy in particular. There was a plea of guilty to criminal negligence causing death and criminal negligence causing bodily injury. It didn't go to either a preliminary hearing or a trial. There was a plea and there was an 18-month conditional sentence.

The importance of this amendment, other than—obviously, I agree with David's comments and what others have said of the importance. There's one objective here, essentially. It's to cause an amendment that will help prevent further serious injury and death. It is as simple as that. If you talk to the enforcement authorities,

they all support the need. Waterways are very difficult to police because there are no designated routes. They're not armed with the same type of thing they can do on the highway, where they can set up photo radar on some occasions or they have patrols out. It's more difficult in the water because of the routes, and people aren't experienced. You don't even have to have a licence to drive a boat until, I think, September 1, 2009. The only things that are licensed now are boats under four metres, which pick up the Sea-Doos but not the big power boats. So this is an area that cries out for some additional deterrents, and this is a substantial deterrent.

Let me put it on a personal basis. Although I can't establish this because it came to me through a different source, I know that the driver of the boat that killed Pete could not get insurance to drive a boat. The reason he couldn't get it was because he had a lengthy car driving record. So the insurers are recognizing the correlation between using your rights and privileges to drive an automobile and those with a boat. The protection of the public, the citizens you represent, is important in this case. Under the Marine Liability Act, unlike the Highway Traffic Act, the owner of a boat is not vicariously liable, so you have to establish negligence on the owner of the boat before you recover. Back in the centuries when boats used to sail away and the owner wouldn't see the master for six months—that has stayed with us. So there's a need, I say, to have this further protection.

One of the things we all know people respond to is if they may lose their licence and they may not be able to get insurance, or, if they do get it, they're going to pay a lot more for it. That in itself is a deterrent.

Obviously, the reduction of injuries is important. The revenue-positive that David had mentioned—there are always, as in Pete's case, lengthy investigations, time-consuming court appearances. Now you've got his friend seriously injured: two weeks in Sunnybrook, six weeks in St. Joseph rehab. I don't know whether he's still having treatment, but he still has residual complaints. All of that is on the public purse. So if you reduce this, it's revenue-positive.

I know the struggles you all go through as members to try and answer to the public's concerns, but importantly, this is not a new offence. You're not creating a new offence. This offence is under the Criminal Code. So if there's a justification for a conviction for alcohol, it's under the Criminal Code. All you're doing is a logical extension of the penalty. The 12-hour suspension, for example: Police officers have told me, "We stop somebody on the water. We know they've been drinking. The guy parks his boat at the marina, gets into his car and drives away." This way, he's going to go to their detachment in 12 hours and get his licence back. If that doesn't wake people up, nothing will.

So all of this, in the end, encourages boating. The crazy part about this amendment is that more people will use the waterways. More tourists will be here. People will feel less at risk. If you talk to cottagers, they don't drive their boats at night because they're fearful of people on the water.

It's an interesting attitude change that has to occur. Friends of mine say that their daughters will never get into a car with somebody who's drinking, but they'll get into a boat. It makes no sense, but it's because we haven't developed this attitude change that will come about.

I think what David has done, the press that's been received this year, and really through the help of Pete's friends, has been helpful. People are talking about this. I've had a lot of people come up to me and talk about it. You can't find anybody against it. The reason is, the person against it has to be in favour of breaching the provisions of the Criminal Code. So nobody is going to openly say, "I'm against it." This is very important.

I'm trying to make some sense out of Pete's death for myself, for my family, for his friends, so as a result, I spent this time on this. One of the things that's happened—and I think we're all stakeholders now. David is doing the same thing. I really appreciate his support in this, but he's reading the papers the same way I am now: Where's the boating? There's a boating death; there's a drowning. It's alcohol-related.

What I fear is that I'm not going to have done enough to make this happen, and I don't want to feel responsible. I know no one in this room wants to feel responsible or to put somebody else in the position that my family is in. So I'm here, obviously, to support this. I think it makes sense.

It's funny. Walking up—one of my former partners sits on the Court of Appeal. He asked me where I was going, and I told him I was going here. He said, "How can this not happen?" One of Pete's friends, in a kind way, said, "If this legislation had been passed in 1998, do you think Pete's accident"—it's not an accident—"his death would have occurred?" I said, "I can't let my mind go there, because that's too difficult." But I certainly will not sit back and watch others have the same experience unless I feel I've made every effort to have this legislation passed.

**1000**

I thank you for your time. I apologize; this is the first time I've been this emotional, but maybe that simply indicates how important this is.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Crompton.

The official opposition.

**Mr. Martiniuk:** My condolences, Mr. Crompton. I do admire your bravery in assisting this committee today. I certainly am in support of this bill.

**Mr. Crompton:** Thank you.

**The Acting Chair:** The third party.

**Ms. Martel:** Thank you for being here. Maybe I'll just make a couple of points. I don't have questions; I read your correspondence and I've heard you repeat much of what was in the correspondence.

You talked about the power of the bill to act as a deterrent because people then would really have to deal with significant insurance costs. In many cases it becomes even more important as a deterrent because they lose their licence, and that may also be a loss of their

employment. So there is the real power with respect to the deterrent, which is the same reason why the former government, I think, allowed for driver's licence suspensions if you don't pay your family support or your child support, because that might hit you very significantly economically and force you to respond in a way that you might not have otherwise.

The second point is that when you talked about friends who had children—daughters, sons—who wouldn't think of getting into a car where there was an impaired driver but would not have a second thought to get into a boat where a driver had been drinking, it just reminds me—at one point we dealt with snowmobiles. We did that because machines are so powerful now. They're just so incredible to try to handle, to manoeuvre. You can get very seriously hurt at an open waterway. That possibility to be hurt just doesn't exist on a roadway, because you're limited by shoulders, trees or whatever. The waterway, in the same way that your son died, very clearly shows you how easily that can happen. Given the power of these vehicles now, the damage that can be done by someone who is operating such a vehicle while impaired is really clear to me and, I hope, really clear to most of the general public. That's the second reason why people should really think again about why it is just the same to get into a car with someone who is drunk as it is to get into a boat with someone who is drunk. It's absolutely the same, and the consequences just as horrific.

Finally, when you tell the committee that you are afraid you won't have done enough, I just really have to reassure you. I read the correspondence before the committee hearings. I was very moved by it. Frankly, I think it takes an incredible amount of courage for a parent who has suffered an enormous tragedy to try to turn that tragedy into something positive. You didn't have to be here today. You didn't have to do the work with Mr. Zimmer leading up to today. You didn't have to be public, because what happened was very public indeed. But you've made that decision, and I just have to say to you that I'm very impressed and very moved by your courage. So I think you have done more than enough, and it is my hope that we'll be able to pass the bill. While we can't change what has happened, we'll give you some solace that your actions will prevent further tragedy and further death.

Thank you very much for coming today.

**Mr. Crompton:** Thank you. The interesting thing in what you're talking about is the power boats; obviously, the power is an enormous power. But one of the things I've found is that somebody who has limited experience can go to a marina and rent a big boat. All he has to do is have some idea about the waterways and know a little bit about safety; he doesn't have to have a licence, and he's suddenly out on the waterway. If you talk to people who are experienced boaters, you've got people passing on the port side when they should be on the starboard side, and people crossing channels and wakes. As you've described, on the highways there's a lot been done—there's still a lot more to do—to regulate and control highway

use. But boating use is a problem; it has other serious implications. Thank you for that.

**The Acting Chair:** Mr. Rinaldi.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi (Northumberland):** Mr. Crompton, thank you for being here today. Much has been said already by previous speakers. I think what you're doing is certainly a plus for society. Whatever this ends up being at the end of the day that we don't know of now, I think just the awareness you've raised is phenomenal. Thank you for your courage. I can appreciate being a parent and a grandparent. I have a son who got hurt during a snowmobile accident, just a broken leg, and I know how traumatic that was for my wife, for me, for my daughter-in-law and for the rest of the family. What you've experienced, I don't think we can appreciate it, so thank you for being here.

A question to Mr. Zimmer on this—and hopefully we deal through regulations or somewhere if this bill goes through. I have two points. Where does this impact, for example, if the operator of a motorized vessel doesn't have a licence? Will they fall under the same category as somebody driving a car without a driver's licence? That's number one. Second, possession of open alcohol in the vessel within reach of the operator—I'm not sure what the regulations are. If you're in a motor vehicle, I know that you cannot have an open bottle of beer within reach, or whatever the regulations are, even though you haven't been drinking. Will this apply to the vessel as well? In a sense that's very important, for them to look at something, and we need to be a little bit more comprehensive.

**Mr. Zimmer:** Obviously, that's a problem we have. Right now, the analogy is that if someone who does not have an Ontario driver's licence and has never had one is stopped for impaired driving and convicted, there's no licence to suspend. My sense is that probably judges take that into account when they're assessing any other penalty in addition to the suspension of the driver's licence. That's something I'd have to check. I'm assuming that if you were eligible for a driver's licence but didn't have one—you just hadn't applied for one—you wouldn't be able to get one. But I'm not sure of that and I'll get an answer to that. It's a good question.

Mr. Crompton, who I know is an experienced motor vehicle lawyer, knows.

**Mr. Crompton:** The second point you raise is an interesting one, and I don't want to go there today. I'm not asking the committee today, nor is David. If you have open alcohol in a vehicle or in a boat, the charges that are laid are under the Liquor Licence Act. This is an Ontario statute, where I think section 32(3) says that you're subject to an offence, and it's punishable by a fine. I don't know whether you read a Focus article in the Globe last year on my son, which was followed the next week-end by a boat patrol by P.C. Moffatt. The caption by the writer at the Globe is, "OPP Go Fishing for Boneheads," but if you read the article—and David has a copy—it says that the experience that OPP officers have when approaching a boat is that they see glasses going over the side, they see cans in the water, so they are charging

people with environmental offences and under the Liquor Licence Act. But the way to strengthen the liquor licence provisions, in my view—the demerit point system is a regulation to the Highway Traffic Act, regulation 578. That simply sets out the number of demerit points for different offences. All that has to be done to the demerit point regulation is to add the Liquor Licence Act, and put four demerit points for having open booze in a car or in a boat. Already in the act you'll see, for stop signs, a demerit point system recognizes municipal and railway offences, as well as Highway Traffic Act offences, so it's already there.

#### 1010

I'm sure—no surprise—we've all been stopped for various things by the police, but the majority of people worry more about a demerit point than they do a fine. If you read the OPP article, there's a guy with a \$5-million cottage. What does he care about a \$215 fine? But when he's got a combination of things on his licence, he's got to do two things. Under the Highway Traffic Act, we accumulate points for two years; insurers keep it for three years. This is how the insurance industry can help, by hitting these people with serious premium increases. That's the deterrent value. That may be for another day but, as I understand it, an order in council can do that.

With respect to the licence issue, as I understand it now, if there's a conviction for operation of a vessel, there's a suspension of your privileges to operate the vessel. Most of those occur during the winter. The one thing important about the statistics that David is referring to is that we're talking about a three- to four-month boating season. We are the third-largest jurisdiction in terms of boating deaths in North America; Florida and Texas are ahead of us. A whole bunch of things will go with this, and provinces can't do it because it's the federal government that has to be involved because it's navigable waters and all those things.

Some jurisdictions in the United States have reduced the 0.08 impairment, as we have under the Criminal Code, to something less because it takes one third the amount of alcohol to create the same conditions as driving a car if you're driving a boat because of the sun, the motion, the vibration, the wind and all those things. Really, there's an argument that it is so much more critical to do something about alcohol abuse on the water than it is even in a car. Statistically, that information is there, and jurisdictions in the States are trying to respond to it.

The crazy part of this, again—and then I'll stop—is this is good for boating; this is good for tourism; this is good for everything.

**The Acting Chair:** Mr. Craitor, you have two minutes if you want to ask a question.

**Mr. Kim Craitor (Niagara Falls):** I have just two very quick comments. As everyone else in this room, I send my condolences and my congratulations that you have the courage to be here. I just couldn't imagine it as a parent; I just couldn't.

I want to thank you. I represent the riding of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and all the way up to Fort

Erie. Boats are a way of life, whether they're Americans or Canadians. Our waterways are inundated all the time. We had a public meeting just two weeks ago because of safety. We had a death in our community. It wasn't alcohol-related.

I'm really familiar with the bill, but I want to thank you because there are a number of things that hadn't even crossed my mind. The alcohol just didn't cross my mind. We see it in our community, because I go down there and watch people pushing off their boats and there's a case of beer in it. It's just sort of normal; they do it and nobody thinks anything of it. But, for example, what you just said: Less alcohol is required to have an impact on a boat driver than even on an automobile driver.

The point I was going to make was to thank you, because we're trying to come up with some solutions in our own community to deal with making our waterways safer, and I'm certainly going to support this bill. In fact, I'm going to go back to my community and to our council there and make them aware of your son and the tragedy that has occurred and make sure that we get the support from our own local councils—and I have three of them—to endorse the bill so we can show how significant it is within our own community. So I just want to say thanks.

**Mr. Crompton:** Thank you.

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel (Lambton–Kent–Middlesex):** Thank you, Mr. Crompton. I first of all want to extend my sympathies to you and your wife and your son Jeff. I certainly can hear that this loss has left a great, gaping hole in your family.

One thing I want to say about this—I too have a riding that abuts Lake Huron, where there's a lot of boating. We see there too, as has anyone who has been on the water or even stood on the lakeshore and watched, some of the reckless boating that goes on. Your first thought is for the people who are out there who might be hurt by it, but also for the person who is being reckless, because they will do some harm to themselves too. We all know that's possible.

What we're doing currently is sending mixed messages. We're saying it's OK to be on the water and drinking, but when you get off the boat and get in your car, all of a sudden you know you're not supposed to be drinking. We need to be consistent in our messages, especially for our young people, our teenagers. They need to hear consistently that drinking and the operation of anything—and I extend that to any industry; we all know you wouldn't go to work drunk and operate heavy power equipment. That endangers yourself and your co-workers. We wouldn't be drunk and operate a tractor on the farm. There's no reason that this shouldn't be extended to when you're off land and on water. I think we need to put an end to the mixed messages we're sending to the public, especially to our young people.

**Mr. Crompton:** Just on that point—

**The Acting Chair:** If you would, just a quick one.

**Mr. Crompton:** Just one second. On the point you both raised, if you look at the letter from the Georgian Bay Association—I think David attached it to his



material—that association represents 4,200 vacation cottagers, but those cottagers, as I understand it, are also travelling from their homes to work. They understand that the effect of this amendment is that they'd lose their driver's licence, but they support it. People everywhere on the water are supporting this, so it's crazy not to have it passed.

**The Acting Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Crompton, and thank you, committee and staff.

The committee is adjourned until Tuesday, September 27, 2005, at 9:30 a.m. in Jordan, Ontario.

*The committee adjourned at 1017.*





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