



# Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council

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## CANADA: TIME TO MAKE CRITICAL CHANGES FOR FLOATPLANE SAFETY

March 31, 2023-Nuu-chah-nulth Territories

On October 18, 2021, a Tofino Air Float plane crashed into a water taxi in Tofino Harbour. This was the second float plane accident in Tofino Harbour in 3 months. Both accidents had injuries to the NTC President, employees and First Nations are were directly affected. The Transportation Safety Board (TSB) has filed its investigation report on this incident and its findings are:

“In busy harbours that accommodates both vessel and aircraft traffic should have designated aircraft landing areas, means for aircraft to signal their presence or have vessel speed limits, or there is an increased risk of collision as a result of vessels and aircraft operating in close proximity at high speeds.”

After the TSB findings on the first plane accident in July 2021, where they found that reduced speed limits were needed in the Tofino harbour, the federal government did nothing stating it was up to local authorities to limit speeds. The TSB finding in its report on the floatplane/water taxi accident states

“If Transport Canada’s process for implementing safe speeds in harbours relies solely on local authorities recognizing that a risk exists and proactively initiating the process for implementing a restriction, there is a risk that restrictions will not be implemented and vessels will continue to operate at speeds that pose a risk of collision. “

Judith Sayers, President of the NTC states that “Canada must change its legislation and policies so they have the authority to regulate speeds in harbours as the local authorities are not doing anything to address a large safety concern. Or at the very least that Canada must compel local authorities to implement speed reductions so that action is taken as necessary.”

Les Doiron says that “Many Nuu-chah-nulth on the west coast rely on float planes and water taxis to get to their homes and NTC employees utilize these forms or transportation all the time to provide services to the west coast communities. We want the highest standards possible to ensure their safety.”

Historically Canada has a tendency to either disregard or procrastinate over important findings and recommendation from approved Transportation Safety boards, Canadian Commission and Inquiries organizations and this is unacceptable as lives are at risk by not acting on these findings. Why bother to have a TSB, Commission or other body to make findings and recommendations if the Canadian governments ignores them?

Judith Sayers further states that “Tofino harbour must be designated as a Water Airport to ensure high standards are set and followed. The Minister has the authority under the Canadian Aviation

Regulations Part III to issue a certificate if its in the public interest and would further the safe operation of the aerodrome. We call on the Minister to do so.”

NTC would like to make public safety on float planes and in busy harbours a priority and call on the Federal Government to act now before there are further accidents. Being in a float plane accident is very traumatic both physically, emotionally and mentally and preventing these kinds of accidents is possible if the Federal government implements findings and recommendations from these two incidents.

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About Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council

The Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC) provides programs and services to over 10,000 registered members. The role of the NTC is to represent 14 First Nations in three regions stretching 300 kilometers of the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island from Brooks Peninsula in the north to Point-no-Point in the south. The NTC represents Ahousaht, Ditidaht, Ehattesaht/Chinehkont, Hesquiaht, Hupacasath, Huu-ay- aht, Kyuquot/Checklesah, Mowachaht /Muchalaht, Nuchatlaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, Tseshaht, Uchucklesaht and Ucluelet First Nations and provides a variety of programs and services to them.

For more information, please visit [www.nuuchahnulth.org](http://www.nuuchahnulth.org).