



**GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE**  
CITIES INITIATIVE  
**L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES**  
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

**May 2022**

**A Resolution Submitted by Township of the Archipelago**



**Regulating Floating Cottages**

WHEREAS Floating Cottages (accommodation units on non-navigable and non-motorized rafts) need to be distinguished from Houseboats (boats with a regular hull containing accommodation);

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages pose an environmental threat due to their long-term presence in one location and improper disposal of grey water, black water and garbage;

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages pose environmental threats to aquatic vegetation and fish habitat by blocking sunlight to the lakebed for extended periods of time, and an additional threat of disturbing the lakebed sediment (that can contain harmful heavy metals such as mercury) with the application of pillars;

AND WHEREAS Transport Canada does not regulate a class of vessel designed to stay in one place rather than navigate around waterways (i.e. Floating Cottages);

AND WHEREAS the U.S. Coast Guard defines vessels to include *every* description of watercraft or other artificial contrivance used, or capable of being used, as a means of transportation on water;

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages do not meet Transport Canada's construction or navigation standards;

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages potentially pose a navigational hazard to other vessels, in particular if there are inadequate night-time navigation lights applied and/or if waterways used by boaters and residents are blocked or impeded;

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages increase the human presence on waterways significantly because they remain in place for extended periods of time, which poses negative environmental impacts such as shoreline erosion, habitat disturbances, greywater or blackwater discharge, garbage disposal, unencapsulated foams, fuel spills and noise disturbances;

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages are accommodation units located within municipal boundaries that use municipal services;

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages are unable to safely dispose of their grey water, black water, and garbage due to their immobility and practices are contrary to municipal regulations for all other accommodation units within a municipality;

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages do not meet building standards under the Ontario Building Code;

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages currently provide no tax revenues to the municipality where they are used, providing no path for the municipality to recover the costs of services that they are obligated to provide such as:

- Waste management;
- Policing (municipalities fund the costs of OPP in their area)
- EMS and fire services;
- Bylaw enforcement; and
- Municipal planning.

AND WHEREAS Floating Cottages should be subject to all relevant municipal bylaw regulations with appropriate permissions in place to board for inspection & enforcement;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative requests that:

- Transport Canada cease issuing vessel licenses for Floating Cottages and rescind all such licenses that have been issued;
- If cease/rescind is not possible, then:
  - The Ontario Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) should revise rules related to the duration of stay permitted by

Floating Cottages at crown land locations and agree that the municipalities' regulations will apply to all Floating Cottages attached to crown land;

- The Canada Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans should support municipal regulation of the lakebed within municipal boundaries; and
- The Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing should support municipal regulation of Floating Cottages, including the ability of a municipality to tax Floating Cottages that are located within the municipal boundaries.

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: the federal Ministers of Transport and Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard; the Ontario Ministers of Natural Resources and Forestry and Municipal Affairs and Housing, MPs and Ontario MPPs representing communities along the Great Lakes and elected leaders of all municipalities in Ontario.