



May 16, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honourable Doug Ford
Premier of Ontario
Legislative Building, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford:

Re: Bill 93, Joshua's Law (Lifejackets for Life), 2023

On behalf of the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts, I am writing to convey the Board's support for Bill 93 Joshua's Law (Lifejackets for Life), 2023 which recently passed second reading.

The matter of boating safety and drowning prevention is of great interest to the Board of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts. On September 22, 2022, we advised your office of the Board's [resolution](#) to request the Government of Ontario to enact legislation requiring all individuals in a pleasure boat to wear a lifejacket or PFD.

Over the 10-year period from 2012 to 2021, 2147 Ontarians (65 Sudbury and districts) had emergency department visits that resulted from a drowning or submersion injury related to watercraft and, over the last 10 years of available death data (2009-2018), 198 Ontarians (8 Sudbury and districts) died of a drowning or submersion injury related to watercraft. The Board of Health is aware that of the nationally reported boating deaths from 2013 to 2017 for which data were available, 79% were not wearing a lifejacket or personal floatation device (PFD). Not wearing a lifejacket is the most common behavioural risk factor associated with boating drownings across the lifespan. In Canadian drowning deaths from 2013 to 2017 for which PFD data were available, 87% of 15–34-year-olds, 75% of 35–64-year-olds, and 80% of 65+ year olds were not wearing lifejackets. Not wearing lifejackets continues to be identified as the most common risk factor in drowning deaths beyond childhood.

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Bill 93 is an important first step to saving lives. Public Health will continue to strongly advocate for the Government of Ontario to enact legislation requiring all individuals to wear a personal flotation device (PFD) or lifejacket while on a pleasure boat that is underway, or while being towed behind a pleasure boat using recreational water equipment.

Thank you for your attention on this important issue.

Sincerely,



René Lapierre
Chair, Board of Health

cc: Honourable C. Mulroney, Minister of Transportation
Honourable S. Jones, Minister of Health
Jamie West, Member of Provincial Parliament, Sudbury
France Gélinas, Member of Provincial Parliament, Nickel Belt
Michael Mantha, Member of Provincial Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin
Viviane Lapointe, Member of Parliament, Sudbury
Marc Serré, Member of Parliament, Nickel Belt
Carol Huges, Member of Parliament, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapuskasing
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
All Ontario Boards of Health