

The St. Lawrence, Quebec's National Heritage!

A Proclamation Is Needed

The St. Lawrence must be proclaimed a national heritage. This is the message conveyed by Les Amis de la vallée du Saint-Laurent (AVSL) to all Quebecers to gain their support and commitment to the issue right now.

We have been working for years to promote interest and highlight the importance of recognizing the St. Lawrence as a national heritage. After launching the idea in the 1990s, we pleaded the case before the Commission sur la gestion de l'eau au Québec chaired by the BAPE in 1998-1999, and then again before authorities responsible for the preparation of the Quebec Water Policy tabled in 2002. In this policy, the government agreed to recognize the river as "a national heritage to be protected, developed and enhanced." Since then, we have multiplied approaches made to the Ministère du Développement durable, de l'Environnement et des Parcs to have this commitment implemented. We recently intervened on the question before the Commission des Transports et de l'Environnement at the National Assembly during the review of draft legislation on water (Bill 27 – An Act to affirm the collective nature of water resources and provide for increased water resource protection). We are now launching a public membership campaign to have the St. Lawrence recognized as a national heritage without further delay.

Why proclaim the St. Lawrence a national heritage?

The St. Lawrence warrants prestige, first because it is Quebec's greatest natural, historic and cultural resource, and secondly, because the St. Lawrence is the most important resource guaranteeing Quebec's economic and human development. Finally, it is vital that a special and distinct legal status be obtained to protect and develop the river commensurate with its importance and unique prestige. This status must situate and honour the river for what it represents, because it is so important and essential for Quebec. It must also encourage Quebecers' identification and self-recognition with the river as a symbol of power and pride.

What will a proclamation of the St. Lawrence as a national heritage ensure the river and offer the community?

Proclaiming the St. Lawrence a national heritage will make a new approach to the river mandatory, based on terms determined by the prestigious nature of its status and uniqueness. It will foster a climate and framework conducive to the inclusion of clauses foreseeing specific applications of legislation applying to the St. Lawrence and its shores. Likewise, its status will encourage the emergence of ambitious, bold and innovative initiatives.

Following are domains in which legislation, regulations and community initiatives might be directed towards original and particularly innovative development based on the St. Lawrence's status as a national heritage:

- » **Land-use planning:** this status will encourage the return of a considerable amount of riparian land to the public domain;
- » **Ecosystem conservation:** this status would offer exceptional protection to riparian and insular habitats of great ecological worth having survived urbanization, industrialization and maritime and port development;
- » **Appropriation of the river bed:** this status will reform the Watercourses Act which, in other historical contexts, allowed the private appropriation of riverbed water lots;
- » **Maritime transport:** this status will promote multimodal and intermodal forms of transportation to capitalize on the exceptional water route offered by the St. Lawrence in Quebec and maximize its use for all;
- » **Tourism:** this status will pave the way for exceptional opportunities along the St. Lawrence in terms of land and river tourism, ecotourism, adventure tourism and holiday resorts;
- » **Scenery:** this status will serve to better inventory, protect and enhance the grand scenery of the St. Lawrence Valley.

It is time for the St. Lawrence to be recognized as a national heritage with exciting and plentiful prospects. A show of strong popular support in this respect will be a determining factor. It is to this end that Les Amis de la vallée du Saint-Laurent deploy efforts to encourage and promote this response and now invite the population to join them.

**The ST. LAWRENCE needs US, and WE need the St. Lawrence.
Let us ensure its future and ours by proclaiming it a NATIONAL HERITAGE !**

The Board of Directors
Les Amis de la vallée du Saint-Laurent (AVSL)

SIGN THE PETITION

Add your voice to that of Les Amis de la vallée du Saint-Laurent to ask the government to **PROCLAIM the St. Lawrence a national heritage now.**

www.avsl.qc.ca

Your support is vital to the pursuit of our mission and actions.

BECOME A MEMBER !



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