



news release

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TRANSPORT OF OIL THROUGH HEAD HARBOUR PASSAGE

The Canadian Government today announced the enactment of regulations under Part XX of the Canada Shipping Act which limit to 5000 cubic metres (approximately 5000 metric tons) the quantity of crude oil or oil product which may be carried in tankers in the waters of Head Harbour Passage, New Brunswick.

This action reflects the particular importance the Government of Canada attaches to the valuable economic and environmental resources of the Passamaquoddy area, which include a multimillion-dollar fishing industry with its ancillary enterprises such as processing factories, a unique marine environment including the Deer Island archipelago, as well as tourism and recreational resources including the Roosevelt-Campobello International Park. The Government of Canada is determined to maintain and develop a prosperous local economy based on the exploitation of renewable resources.

The value of these resources, and the risks presented to them by oil pollution, were documented in a series of studies published between 1974 and 1979 by the Departments of Environment and of Fisheries and Oceans. The navigational difficulties of Head Harbour Passage were assessed and confirmed by Transport Canada in 1976.

At present the most likely source of such tanker traffic would be the Pittston Company's proposed oil port and refinery at Eastport, Maine, whose crude supplies and product would be shipped in tankers through Head Harbour Passage. The Pittston Company, and the United States Government, have been repeatedly informed that the Canadian Government regards the large-scale transit of pollutants through Head Harbour Passage as environmentally unacceptable, and is prepared if necessary to regulate to prevent it. This message was conveyed in a Note to the U.S. State