



**John Cummins**  
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## News Release

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### Report Casts Doubt on Remaining Hovercraft at Vancouver Airport

**OTTAWA**— “No back-up hovercraft has yet been purchased. Now a Coast Guard engineering report casts doubt on the reliability of the only remaining operational hovercraft at the Vancouver Airport,” said John Cummins, M.P. (Delta-South Richmond). “Without a backup hovercraft we are courting disaster.”

The Canadian Coast Guard Hovercraft Unit Engineering Department report states:

**“The engineering department at Sea Island base has experienced a significant amount of defects and down time due to inherent design and system failures on ‘Siyay.’ ... Corrosion in the engine compartments is at an unacceptable limit and controlling the corrosion due to the design is almost impossible. The nature and broad scope of corrosion will have a definitive negative effect on expected craft life and engine components.”**

Today in Parliament Cummins challenged Fisheries Minister Robert Thibault on the engineering report and what action had been taken to secure a back-up hovercraft:

**Cummins:** Mr. Speaker, a Coast Guard engineering report warns of serious corrosion problems on the hovercraft currently in use in Vancouver. After a recent trip two and a half tonnes of water were pumped from the vessel. The corrosion identified in the Coast Guard report will not stop. It will not reverse itself. The leaks will only get worse. What is the Minister's plan to deal with this serious erosion of rescue services on the west coast?

**Thibault:** Mr. Speaker, the member knows that the *Siyay* is a formidable craft, a great state of the art vessel. Any time a new vessel like that which is comparable to aircraft is commissioned, there are some technical defects and some technical adjustments that must be made. They are being done. They are being noted in case we build a new one like that in the future to replace the one we have so that we have an even better craft.

**Cummins:** Mr. Speaker, these are more than technical problems. The engineering report refers to them as serious problems, almost impossible to control. We have a hovercraft based at Vancouver Airport which is in a questionable state of readiness and last September the Coast Guard Commissioner told us it would take two years to put in service a used hovercraft to back up the *Siyay*. Without an operational hovercraft mariners are at risk, air travellers are at risk. Why will the government not properly equip the Coast Guard on the west coast?

When can we expect a replacement hovercraft for the *Siyay* and how much is it going to cost?

**Thibault:** Mr. Speaker, it is completely irresponsible because the *Siyay* is performing very well. It is a reliable craft. It will serve the people very well for a long time. I have been working closely with the member for Richmond who wants to ensure that we have a second hovercraft there to help in the security of the people. We will continue to do that. We will get a temporary craft and we will start plans immediately to build a new replacement hovercraft.

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