

HARBOUR DIVESTITURE IN CANADA: IMPLICATIONS OF CHANGING GOVERNANCE



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Following the implementation of the National Marine Policy, the federal government of Canada has attempted to strengthen the public port and harbour system by transferring management and operation of major ports to not-for-profit organisations. The aim of this paper is to make policy recommendations to improve management of marine harbours once divested and prevent unexpected liabilities for new owners.

APPROACH:

An assessment was made to determine the current harbour divestiture programme using published and grey literature reviews, including federal government website information. Following the assessment, Case studies of harbours currently undergoing divestiture across Canada were highlighted to illustrate potential limitations associated with changing governance using case examples of harbours currently undergoing divestiture.

MAIN FINDINGS:

- Recommendations for divestiture include:
 - Provisions for adequate training and mentoring of new custodians by government agencies.
 - Provisions to allow new custodians to generate new sources of revenue to cover management costs, particularly costs related to future cleanup.
 - Following established management protocols in order to allow new owners to more readily understand potential future environmental liabilities.
 - Consultation and engagement between the federal government and First Nation communities prior to divestiture to avoid unnecessary delays or extra costs.