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# News Release

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## **Government of Canada announces major investments in Îles-de-la-Madeleine port and airport facilities**

**Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Quebec, August 19, 2008** – The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Labour and Minister of Canada Economic Development, took the opportunity while visiting the Îles-de-la-Madeleine area to report on the *Support Initiative for International Cruise Development along the St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers*. A budget allocation of \$46 million has been earmarked for the upgrading of port facilities intended for the berthing of large cruise ships and for the enhancement of tourist attractions.

Along with Îles-de-la-Madeleine, the other ports of call targeted by this initiative include Saguenay, Côte-Nord (Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles and Havre-Saint-Pierre) as well as Gaspésie (in the Gaspé-Chandler axis).

Îles-de-la-Madeleine economic stakeholders are already working to develop a project on improving port infrastructure and accommodating cruise passengers that stems from a feasibility study conducted in early 2008 and funded, in part, by Canada Economic Development.

“I firmly believe in the vast promise of the international cruise industry and in its potential for fostering the sustainable development of many Quebec communities. Modernizing or developing ports of call will help strengthen and diversify the economic base of these communities. Our government sees this initiative as strategically important because of the numerous spin-offs it will generate by prolonging the tourism season, increasing the number of tourists and reinforcing Quebec's position as a world-class destination,” stated Minister Blackburn.

### **Breakwater and airport**

On behalf of the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, Minister Blackburn also announced investments of \$14 million for the restoration of the breakwater at Cap-aux-Meules port and \$1.4 million for improvements to the visual aids at the Havre-aux-Maisons airport.

“These announcements clearly show that the Government of Canada is keeping to its commitment to refurbish federal infrastructure in remote regions. These upgrades will help maintain the safety and efficiency of Îles-de-la-Madeleine's port and airport facilities. These investments will have a positive impact on the archipelago's economic, tourism and recreational activities. This is great news indeed for the region,” noted Minister Cannon.

The breakwater restoration project, which should get under way in autumn 2008 and be completed by summer 2010, mainly involves reinforcing the existing structure. The dredging work initiated last year to increase the water depth for the safe manoeuvring of commercial ships, ferries and cruise vessels will also be resuming shortly.

The investments announced for the airport will be used primarily for the installation of lights and a take-off system to facilitate manoeuvring during reduced visibility.

A public call for tenders will be issued shortly for the breakwater restoration project, with the winning firms chosen based on the results of a rigorous selection process. Details on the capital costs of the work to be undertaken will be made available following the tender call. With respect to the airport project, a contract will be awarded at the conclusion of the tender process that is now in progress.

Work on the port will be subject to an environmental assessment, in compliance with the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*. Any environmental concerns raised by this assessment will be addressed so as to mitigate their impact. Throughout the work on both the port and airport, every effort will be made to minimize any disruptions to the regular operations of these facilities.

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