

Dear Chair Benning and the Members of the Senate Committee on Institutions,

Thank you for your continued support of historic preservation programs throughout the state. The State of Vermont's support of the replica canal schooner *Lois McClure* at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum has allowed more than 300,000 visitors to step aboard and connect with our unique local and regional history since 2003.

After much discussion and work with our staff, partner museums, and professional shipwrights, the Museum's board has come to a decision that the *Lois* will be retired at the end of 2023. Given the required repairs and the increasing annual maintenance costs, the board concluded that these have stretched beyond the original goals and plans for the replica boat project.

Our team feels strongly that there is more work to do on the Schooner project before the *Lois* retires, so starting this spring, we are launching a new oral history and documentation project. I have heard from many people involved in the project about what was important and what we learned. We are committed to documenting that and making it available for future researchers so the Schooner Project can continue to be a teaching tool into the future.

As part of this project, over the next two years, we will do a series of oral history interviews with staff and crew members, welcome input and memories from the public, archive the research and ships drawings from the original build, and make our archives available for researchers and the public.

The *Lois* will be on the water and open to the public at the Museum this summer (2022) and next summer (2023) and then she will come off the water at the end of 2023. At that point, we will use parts of the boat to anchor a new exhibit that will open in 2024. We will continue researching and sharing the unique story of sailing canalboats (the boats, the industry, and most importantly the people) for many years to come. More details about the project are on our website:

<https://www.lcmm.org/lois-mcclure-archiving-project/>

I look forward to welcoming you aboard the *Lois* at the Museum for our summer season, which opens on May 21, 2022.

Thank you for all of your support of the *Lois* (and all of our work) that has made this incredible project possible. Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,



Susan Evans McClure
Executive Director