



Unintended Consequences of Bylaw 20700

**Preserving Safe Rowing Operations on the North Saskatchewan
River for the Edmonton Rowing Club (ERC)**

Edmonton Rowing Club

Introduction

- **Established Legacy** - Founded in 1972, ERC has over 52 years of rowing excellence and community impact.
- **Inclusive Programs** - Offering community and competitive rowing for all ages and skill levels, fostering lifelong participation
- **Significant Participation** - In 2024 alone, ERC served 412 individuals across various programs, strengthening local engagement
- **Unmatched Safety Record** - With zero drowning incidents in 52 years, safety remains a core pillar of ERC's operations.



What is rowing?

Sequence of movement

- Water sport where individuals or teams propel a long, narrow boat with oars
- Follows four-phase motion:
 - **Catch** - where the body is compressed with arms extended
 - **Drive** - pushing with legs engaging core and arms to propel the boat
 - **Finish** - Rower leans back slightly, pulling the oars to their body, removing oar from water
 - **Recovery** - extending arms, hinging forward, returning to the catch position



Catch



Drive



Finish



Recovery

Overview of Proposed Bylaw 20700

Part XI - Recreation

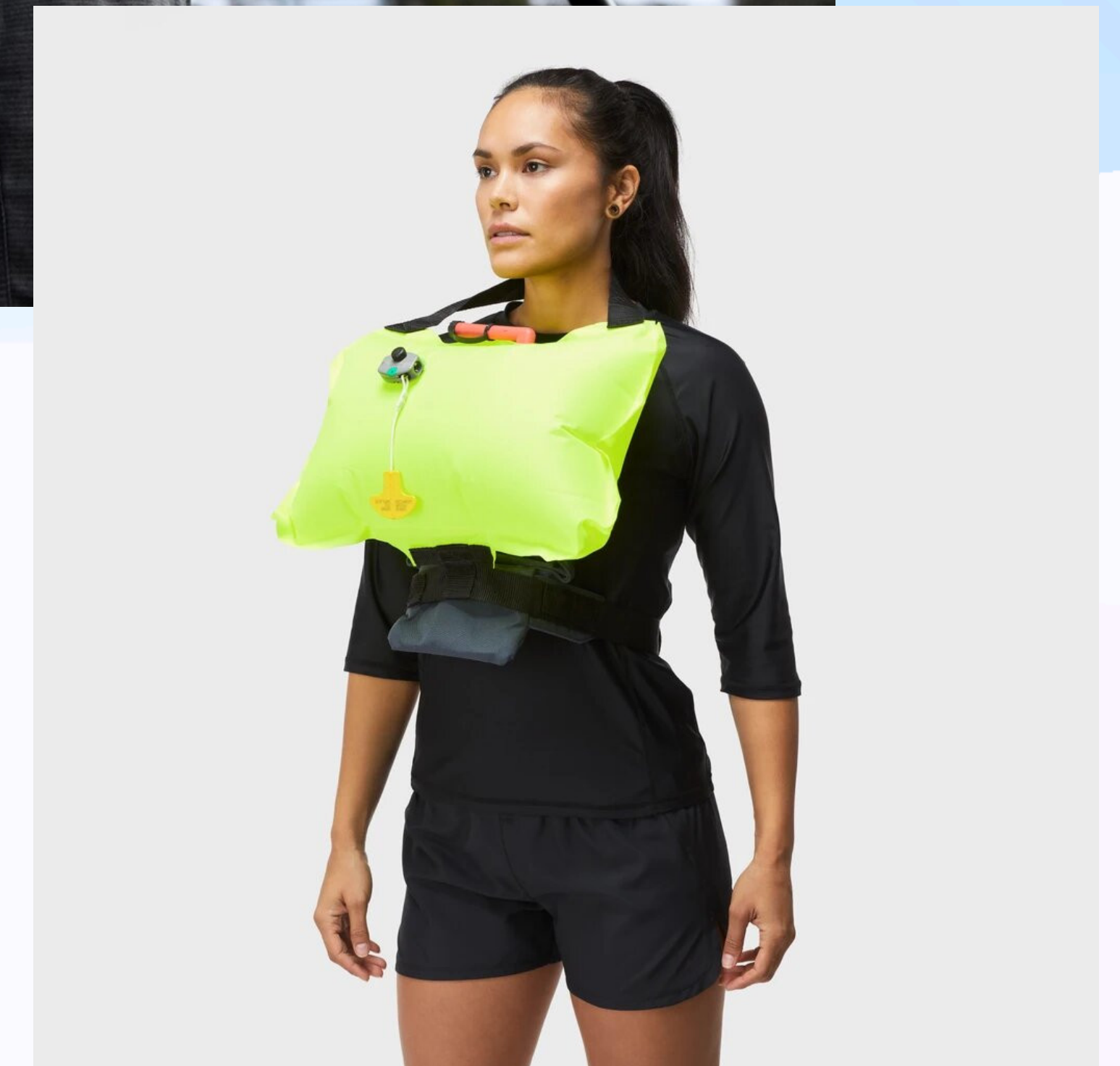
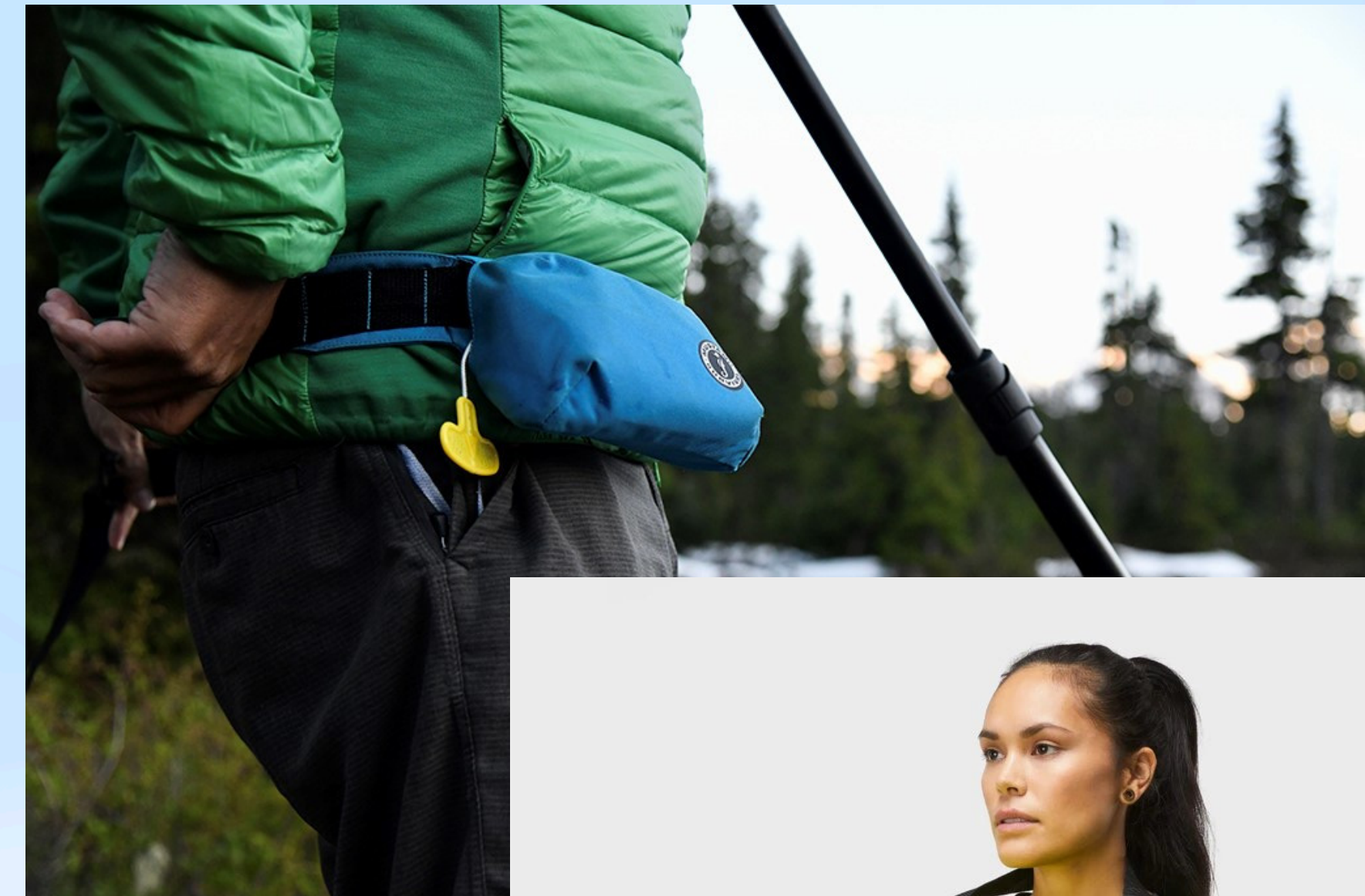
LIFEJACKETS	61	(1)	A person must wear an approved lifejacket or personal floatation device at all times while in, on, or holding on to any vessel being used as a means of water transportation on the North Saskatchewan River or other body of water.
		(2)	The lifejacket or personal floatation device referred to in subsection (1) must be worn in a way and in a condition capable of adequately sustaining the person in the water without effort or motion of any kind.

Bylaw 20700 - Page 20

- Requirement for lifejackets providing flotation without user movement
- New requirement prohibits Transport Canada-approved Inflatable waist belt PFDs used by the ERC

Safety Measures at ERC

- Governed by Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) and Transport Canada Small Vessel Regulations for Rowing Shells
- Members and program users must wear inflatable belt-style pdfs while on water
- Safety boats present with lifejackets for all rowers on the water should they capsize and need further assistance
- Safety policies in place outlining mandatory safety protocols including RCA certified coaches and annual capsize drills enforced by coaches and club manager



Proposed Lifejackets Hinder Rowing

- **Restricted Upper Body Movement** - Traditional lifejackets are bulky and limit the rower's ability to fully extend their arms and rotate or properly compress their torso, which is essential for an efficient stroke.
- **Interference with Rowing Posture** - The flotation material in standard lifejackets forces the rower into an unnatural sitting position, preventing proper engagement of the legs, core, and arms during the stroke.
- **Increased Risk of Capsizing** - The added bulk and improper weight distribution can throw off balance, making it harder to maintain stability in the narrow rowing shell, especially in competitive or high-performance training settings.

Risk Management & Safety Protocols at ERC

- **Strict Supervision Standards** - ERC ensures optimal boat-to-coach ratios for safe and effective oversight.
- **Emergency Preparedness** - Staff are fully trained in emergency response protocols, with Emergency Response Plans clearly posted across all facilities for membership
- **Regulatory Compliance** - ERC conducts regular safety audits and adheres to all Rowing Canada Aviron (RCA) and Transport Canada safety standards.



Request for Exemption & Collaboration

- **Request for Exemption** - ERC seeks approval to continue using Transport Canada-approved waist belt PFDs, which are specifically designed for rowing safety
- **Commitment to Collaboration** - ERC is dedicated to working with the City on safety standards, emphasizing its 52 year history without severe incidents.
- **Limitations of Alternative PFDs** - While automatic inflating PFDs exist, they hinder rowing movement and are prohibitively expensive (\$330+ per unit), reducing accessibility for many participants due to cost.



Key Takeaways and Closing Remarks

- **Proven Safety Record** - ERC has maintained a flawless safety record with zero drowning incidents in 52 years.
- **Operational Impact** - The proposed bylaw would severely hinder rowing by mandating lifejackets that restrict movement, threatening the club's ability to operate.
- **Risk of Closure** - Enforcing this regulation could force ERC to shut down, eliminating a vital recreational and athletic resource for Edmontonians.
- **Call for Collaboration** - ERC requests an exemption and seeks to work with policymakers to ensure safety without compromising the sport.



Rowing is more than a sport - it builds teamwork, resilience, and a sense of belonging. Every stroke pulls not just a boat, but a community forward.

Appendices

- Transport Canada Small Vessel Regulations for Rowing Shells <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/sor-2010-91/page-5.html#h-769800>
- Rowing Canada: Rowing Safely (RCA Safety Requirements & Safety Guidelines) <https://rowingcanada.org/uploads/2019/05/safetyguidelinesrcav2.pdf>

QUESTIONS?

