

Election 2015 Fisheries Survey

Canadian Fisheries Objectives

The Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters' Federation's 32 member organizations represent over 8,000 of Canada's 10,000 independent commercial fishermen; together we provide over 5 billion meals to people per year and are Atlantic Canada's largest private sector employer.

The Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters' Federation is conducting this survey of the leaders of all political parties and their candidates on their political objectives for Canadian fisheries, specifically for their support for independent fishermen.

We will distribute the survey results to our members, our supporters and the media across the country.

This survey should take no more than 10 minutes to complete.

1. Candidate Information

Name

Riding

2. Party Affiliation

3. Are you familiar with Federation membership?

Yes

No

Don't know

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Pacific

Since the 1980s the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has pursued rationalization in British Columbia fishing fleets. The result has shrunk the fishing fleet by 60% and reduced the number of fishermen by 70%.

Over these decades commercial fishing licences, quota and vessel ownership have steadily shifted and concentrated from individual fishermen to companies and from rural to urban areas.

This unregulated approach allows non-fishermen to control fishing licences and quotas and to lease them to active fishermen.

Under this system fishermen’s income has been severely reduced - non-fishermen now pocket as much as 75 per cent of the landed value in some BC fisheries – and rural coastal communities have become disconnected from fisheries.

This unstructured Federal approach is bankrupting BC’s working fishermen and undermining the economies of traditional fishing communities.

In Atlantic Canada and Quebec the Department of Fisheries and Oceans follows different policies ([link to PIIFCAF](#)) that keep fishing licences in the hands of active fishermen in recognition that they are vital for the economic and social prosperity of fishing communities.

Our Federation wants the Federal government to adopt consistent and coherent policy and regulatory frameworks to ensure there is a new generation of independent BC fishermen to carry on the kind of fishery that provides the central foundation for the sustainability and viability of British Columbia’s rural coastal communities.

Following the elections the new government will have to make decisions on these very important policy issues for the future of BC’s fishermen and coastal communities.

1. Do you support fishermen and fishing communities, including First Nations, regaining and retaining their fishing rights, now and in the future?

Yes No Don't know

Comments (please specify)

2. Do you support having fishing licenses and quotas held primarily by those who fish and their communities, and prevent them from becoming a speculative asset?

Yes No Don't know

Comments (please specify)

3. As MP would you encourage the growth, investment in, and regeneration of small boat fleets and coastal communities throughout Canada?

Yes No Don't know

Comments (please specify)

4. Does your party support such measures?

Yes

No

Don't know

Comments (please specify)

5. If elected do you promise to work to ensure a stronger regulatory framework to protect fishermen, small boat fleets and rural fishing communities?

Yes

No

Don't know

Comments (please specify)

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Atlantic and Quebec

Since the 1980s the government of Canada has maintained two policies to ensure that inshore fishing licences would be kept in the hands of independent owner-operators; the family fishing enterprises that form the backbone of the coastal economy.

The Fleet Separation Policy prevents processing companies from owning fishing licenses in the inshore fleet.

The Owner-Operator Policy ensures that the inshore licence holders personally fish their fishing licenses.

The combined effect of the two policies is that only active active fish harvesters can legally own and operate fishing enterprises in the inshore sector. As a result almost all the wealth generated from the inshore fisheries remains in the hands of independent owner-operators in the inshore fleet. These fish harvesters operate out of small ports located close to their fishing grounds, and their economic impact is felt across hundreds of coastal communities.

But these vital family fishing enterprises are under threat. The Fleet Separation and Owner-Operator policies have been seriously undermined over the past two decades by under-the-table “controlling agreements”. The most frequent abuse of the policies occurs when processors purchase licenses using individual fish harvesters as figure heads. The harvester is the nominal license holder, but the company controls the licence through a Controlling agreement.

In April 2007, in response to widespread support from fishermen’s organizations the Honourable Loyola Hearn Minister of Fisheries announced a new policy- Preserving the Independence of the Inshore Fleet in Canada’s Atlantic Fisheries (PIIFCAF) that further strengthened the Owner-operator

and Fleet Separation policies by making Controlling Agreements illegal.

In July 2015 in response to requests from our Federation the Honourable Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries, announced further measures to strengthen and enforce PIIFCAF.

Despite these clear commitments from successive Ministers of Fisheries and overwhelming support from the Atlantic inshore fleets for strengthening the owner-operator and fleet separation policies they continue to be undermined by Controlling agreements.

Our Federation wants the Federal government to adopt consistent and coherent policy and regulatory initiatives to ensure there is a new generation of owner-operator fishermen to carry on the kind of fishery that provides the central foundation for the sustainability and viability of Atlantic coastal communities.

Following the elections the new government will have to make decisions on these very important policy issues for the inshore fleets and coastal communities.

1. Do you support strengthening the owner-operator and fleet-separation policies by enacting regulations to give these policies the force of law?

Yes No Don't know

Comments (please specify)

2. Does your party support such measures?

Yes No Don't know

Comments (please specify)

3. If elected do you promise to work to ensure that the owner-operator and fleet-separation policies are strengthened and given the force of law?

Yes No Don't know

Comments (please specify)

4. Are you in favour of adopting new initiatives to provide loan guarantees for young people to finance licence transfers from retiring fish harvesters?

Yes

No

Don't know

Comments (please specify)

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List of Members

British Columbia: United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union, BC Longline Fishermen's Association.

New Brunswick: Fédération régionale acadienne des pêcheurs professionnels, Maritime Fishermen's Union, Fundy North Fishermen's Association, Grand Manan Fishermen's Association.

Newfoundland and Labrador: Fish, Food & Allied Workers.

Nova Scotia: Eastern Shore Fishermen's Protective Association, Gulf Nova Scotia Fleet Planning Board (Gulf Bonafide Fishermen's Organization, Gulf Nova Scotia Fishermen's Coalition, Inverness South Fishermen's Association, Maritime Fishermen's Union Local 4, Northumberland Fishermen's Association), Guysborough Co Inshore Fishermen's Association, Maritime Fishermen's Union Local 6 and Local 9, Richmond County Fishermen's Association, Halifax West Fishermen's Association, LFA 27 Management Board.

Prince Edward Island: PEI Fishermen's Association (Prince County Fisherman's Association, Eastern Kings Fisherman's Association, North shore Fisherman's Association, Central Northumberland Strait Fisherman's Association, Southern Kings and Queens Fisherman's Association, Western Gulf Fisherman's Association.

Quebec: Alliance des Pêcheurs Professionnels du Québec (Regroupement des Pêcheurs Professionnels Du Sud de la Gaspésie Inc., Association des pêcheurs propriétaires des Iles de la Madeleine, Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels de la moyenne et haute côte-nord), Fédération des pêcheurs semi-hauturiers du Québec (Association des capitaines propriétaire de la Gaspésie, Association des crabiers gaspésiens, Association des crabiers des Iles de la Madeleine).

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Final Questions and Comments

1. If elected will you work to ensure Canada's fisheries resources remain a publicly owned resource, managed sustainably in the best interests of coastal communities, while keeping current and future generations of fishermen in mind?

Yes

No

Don't know

Comments (please specify)

2. Any final comments?

Thank you for your time!