For Immediate Release
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**Newfoundland and Labrador Fish Harvesters Welcome Minister’s Commitment
to Protect the Independence of the Inshore Fishery**

Western Shore, Nova Scotia – The Fish, Food and Allied Workers’ Union (FFAW-Unifor) applauds Minister Dominic LeBlanc’s announcement that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will pursue amendments to the Fisheries Act that will protect the independent owner-operator fishery.

“The best way to build a strong middle class, create jobs and protect and strengthen the economy in coastal communities is through enforcing the owner-operator and fleet separation policies,” said Keith Sullivan, President of the Fish, Food and Allied Workers (FFAW-Unifor). “Today’s announcement is the result of consistent calls from FFAW-Unifor and other fisheries organizations across Canada to keep fishing licenses in the hands of those who actually fish by taking concrete steps to enforce existing policies.”

At meetings of the Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters’ Federation yesterday, FFAW-Unifor representatives participated in a roundtable discussion with Minister Dominic LeBlanc where he announced plans to enshrine owner-operator and fleet separation policies in law. With the force of law, the enforcement of owner-operator and fleet separation will be more robust, with legal consequences for corporations holding fish harvesters in controlling agreements. As Minister LeBlanc noted, this change from policy to law will uphold the principle that the inshore fishery should be guided by what is best for the inshore harvester and coastal communities.

The Minister also announced his intention to explore fundamental changes that would eliminate the financial barriers to entry into the fishery and will be seeking input on how to make licensing processes fairer. Consultations on these changes will be occurring over the coming weeks.

“Across Canada, fisheries organizations are united in our call for enhanced enforcement and genuine protection of the inshore fishery,” continued Sullivan. “We will continue to hold the federal government accountable to their commitments to protect fish harvesters and the coastal communities.”

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