



Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation

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Canada's Independent Fish Harvesters Welcome Landmark Changes to Fisheries Act

Grand Manan Island, New Brunswick – The Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation (CIFHF) is celebrating a significant victory in the fight to protect the independence of Canada's owner operator fishery. After years of lobbying for legislative change, today fish harvesters welcomed the tabling of amendments to the federal Fisheries Act that would enshrine the Owner Operator and Fleet Separation policies in law, protecting the independence of fish harvesters whose industry is the cornerstone of the economy in coastal communities.

"For more than 20 years, fisheries organizations across Canada have been calling on the federal government to enact legislation that ensures fishing licenses and the wealth derived from those licenses stays in the hands of owner operators and their communities, not corporations," said Melanie Sonnenberg, President of the Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation. "Enshrining the owner operator and fleet separation policies in law will protect our industry and allow future generations a fair shot at making a living in the fishery."

Earlier today, federal Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc tabled an Act to amend the Fisheries Act. The amendments include added provisions that would give the Minister authority to make licensing decisions based on socio-economic considerations and for the preservation and promotion of independent owner operators. Additionally, the amendments give the Minister the ability to turn existing policy into regulation, which would give it the force of law, with legal consequences for corporations holding fish harvesters in controlling agreements.

"This legislation draws a line in the sand and sends a clear message to corporations – they can no longer manipulate the system," continued Sonnenberg. "While there is still work to be done to ensure these amendments become law and are given force through regulation, today is a victory for independent fish harvesters across Canada who want to maintain a fishery that supports their families and their communities for generations to come."

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