

BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY

Grow Canada's ocean economy and build resilient coastal communities



For healthy, sustainable ocean ecosystems that support the growth of Canada's thriving ocean economy, Canada needs a Blue Economy Strategy that builds resilient coastal communities with independent harvesters as an essential component.

Canada's three oceans require a strategy that: solidifies the wild fisheries' connection to coastal communities; builds regional collaborative governance with stakeholders; fosters ecosystem-based management; supports local and global food security; and helps to manage rapidly changing ecosystems in a timely manner.

Canada's Blue Economy Strategy should bring together the important economic and environmental concerns facing our ocean ecosystems. Our oceans are facing unprecedented challenges from global forces including pollution, climate change, disruptive technologies, fractured governance, and siloed development. Canada's fish harvesters bear witnesses to the affects of these challenges daily. That is why the Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters' Federation (CIFHF) welcomes the federal government's development of a Blue Economy Strategy.

With global population anticipated to grow to 10 billion by 2050, and with 70-90% of our fresh water already in use by agriculture, increasing food production from our ocean is a must. We must work to ensure that the seafood from our marine estate supports domestic and global food security.

To do this we have to manage our oceans better.

The Blue Economy Strategy must position Canadians to be leaders in wild fisheries management. But we cannot call ourselves leaders while managing stocks on 5-year-old data. Our oceans are changing rapidly, we must learn to manage our fisheries in a timely way by bringing in local ecological knowledge, science, and using the latest technologies to better understand and manage our ocean. This requires an increased level of respect for the knowledge and expertise that harvesters bring to the table and our immersion in all aspects of fisheries harvest. Central to our Blue Economy Strategy will be getting real time information from our fishing boats and directly into the hands of decision makers.

As harvesters, we have continuously adapted our lives and livelihoods in response to both the creation of these strategies and major legislative changes. Harvesters still remember the changes that arose from the Oceans Act in 1997 and the institution of Canada's Oceans Strategy in 2002.

The most recent steps taken with Bill C-68 support both the owner-operator and fleet-separation policies. These policies, which maintain the independence of small-boat owner-operators and implement a fair licensing regime, strengthen coastal communities and the long-term sustainability of our industry. Yet, these gains are risked if the Blue Economy Strategy fails to properly account for the livelihoods of independent harvesters.



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While the Blue Economy Strategy must undoubtedly incorporate a wide range of views and balance a number of considerations, it remains critical that it reflects the perspective, experience and realities of independent harvesters and the coastal communities where we live.

PRIORITIES FOR CANADA'S BLUE ECONOMY STRATEGY

1. Strengthen the role of independent fish harvester's in Canada's Blue Economy.

Canada's independent fish harvesters support local food security, provide over 40,000 direct jobs, generate more than \$3.2 billion in landed value, and billions more in exports for the Canadian economy. As local business owners our money stays in the local economy, and our taxes serve Canadians. Above all else we are invested in the long-term health of our communities and our ocean ecosystems. Too often we see the value generated by our multi-national and vertically integrated competitors flow immediately offshore.

2. Bringing local ecosystem knowledge.

Canadian harvesters' livelihoods depend on the long-term health and success of our ocean ecosystems, we invest in protecting them. We are the ones most often with our hands in the water, noticing shifts in population, pollution, traffic, and trends in climate. Harvesters are eager to contribute our knowledge to processes that deeply impacts our livelihoods.

3. Ocean decision making

Canadian harvesters should be viewed as collaborators and trusted partners in ocean decision making processes, such as Integrated Fisheries Management Plans, the Oceans Protection Plan and when designating Marine Protected Areas. Together harvesters represent the largest fleet on our ocean estate, our vessels need to be linked into a national ocean monitoring system to make timely decisions.



ABOUT US

The Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters' Federation is the national advocacy voice for the people who harvest most of Canada's plentiful and valuable seafood.

We are the people who produce most of Canada's lobster, crab, wild salmon, shrimp, and groundfish. Our seafood landings put Canada among the top fishing nations in the world and make us the single largest private sector employer in most coastal communities.

"A healthy commercial fishery is one of the best indicators of a healthy marine environment and thriving harvesters are one of the best indicators of a healthy commercial fishery."

