



Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation participate in reconciliation workshops

Over the past decades, commercial fish harvesters and First Nations people have developed strong relationships on both the East and West coasts of Canada. Members of the Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation (CIFHF) want positive working relationships with First Nations in their geographic areas; that is why over the course of the last 3 weeks CIFHF members have participated in 7 workshops organized in conjunction with the Federation, the Department of Fisheries (DFO), Department of Justice, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.

Our members have worked alongside Indigenous harvesters for decades, in training and mentoring, marketing, species advisory committees, and science and research. It is because of this working relationship that our members understand the need for respectful dialogue between commercial and Indigenous harvesters; and why CIFHF is calling for a joint working group to be established with CIFHF, DFO and Indigenous leaders to review DFO's fisheries reconciliation strategy and governing principles. "The reconciliation workshops have opened up a dialogue that have helped members understand the complexity of reconciliation. There has been a lot of active listening and deep questioning in these workshops," said Melanie Sonnenberg, President CIFHF. "These workshops have provided a valuable opportunity for all parties to exchange, learn and, ultimately, become more informed."

"Fisheries bring much more than economic value to our communities. They provide a social and ecological connection to the sea that underpins the cultural fabric of our coast. Our communities need our fisheries to remain sustainable for current and future generations. These workshops – which facilitated meaningful dialogue between fish harvesters and government – are a critical step in developing long-term solutions for a way forward," said Jim McIsaac.

Our members want a meaningful role for independent harvester organizations in fisheries reconciliation negotiations. We need the government now to develop solutions that will lead to positive outcomes for all harvesters.

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.

For further information please contact: Melanie Sonnenberg President, CIFHF 1-506-662-5481
msonnenberg@gmfa.nb.ca