Fédération des pêcheurs indépendants du Canada Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation
315 Ingalls Head Road, Grand Manan, N.B. E5G 3G9

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Independent Fish Harvesters Call on Federal Government to Protect Canada's Seafood Sovereignty in the upcoming Budget

Federation urges Minister of Finance to invest in succession, seasonal financing and income stability to safeguard coastal economies and Canada's domestic seafood supply

October 30, 2026 — Grand Manan, NB — The Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation (CIFHF) is calling on the federal Minister of Finance to include targeted financing and income support programs in the upcoming federal budget to protect Canada's independent fishing industry, strengthen food sovereignty and secure the economic future of coastal communities.

In its pre-budget submission, the Federation has outlined a practical approach to addressing the mounting financial pressures facing independent fish harvesters.

"Canada's food sovereignty depends on our ability to harvest and produce our own food, and independent fish harvesters are essential to meet that goal," said Janick Cormier, Executive Director of the CIFHF. "Our fishery supports tens of thousands of jobs and sustains coastal communities across the country. Without meaningful action to address the financial barriers facing harvesters, we risk undermining the very people and communities that keep this industry alive. The November 5 budget is an opportunity for the federal government to demonstrate its commitment to protecting this vital sector."

Three targeted programs to secure the future of Canada's fishery

CIFHF is asking the federal government to adopt three recommendations:

1. Establish a Long-Term Succession Financing Program

   Affordable, stable and flexible financing would help new entrants acquire fishing enterprises, support intergenerational transfers and reduce the financial pressures that can contribute to illegal third-party controlling agreements. Most importantly, it would help ensure that Canada's seafood resources continue to be harvested by independent Canadian owner-operators.

2. Introduce a Harvester Advance Payment Program

   An advance payment program to improve access to working capital, reduce reliance on high-interest private credit and help ensure that harvesters can begin each season with the financial resources needed to operate their businesses.

3. Create a Harvester Income Stabilization Program

An income stabilization program would be activated when a harvester's annual revenue falls below their historical five-year reference revenue, mainly because to factors beyond their control.

Protecting food sovereignty means protecting the people who harvest our seafood.

Independent fish harvesters are a cornerstone of Canada's coastal economy. They support local jobs, businesses and suppliers, sustain communities that depend on fishing, and contribute to food security.

Canada has already recognized the importance of protecting independent fish harvesters through amendments to the *Fisheries Act* in 2019, which strengthened the legislative framework for the owner-operator and fleet separation policies. These protections were subsequently incorporated into enforceable inshore regulations designed to keep fishing licences, control over fishing activities and the economic benefits of the fishery in the hands of independent harvesters. The Federation believes that ensuring access to affordable financing is essential to upholding the intent of these protections and preserving the independence of Canada's fishing fleet.

Affordable financing and income protection can help harvesters remain independent and sustain local ownership, employment and economic activity in our coastal communities

The Federation urges the federal government to include all three programs in its November 5th budget.

The future of Canada's fishery—and the communities it sustains—depends on action today.

– 30 –

Media Contact:
Janick Cormier
Executive Director
Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation
613-252-6250
janickcormier@fed-fede.ca

About the Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation

The Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation represents 14,000 independent owner-operators in an industry supporting approximately 43,000 direct jobs. It advocates for the owner-operator model and the long-term sustainability of Canada's fishery and coastal communities.