



Fisheries Council of Canada urges balancing marine conservation with socio-economic benefits

OTTAWA, January 30, 2018 – Today, the Fisheries Council of Canada (FCC) appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans to urge balancing conservation objectives with socio-economic considerations.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans is studying Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). It is examining the criteria and process being used to identify and establish marine protected areas with the objective of ensuring the criteria and process are aligned to: 1) achieve the intended benefits of MPAs; 2) assess social, economic and environmental impacts of the MPAs; and, 3) ensure all traditional uses and values are duly considered and respected in the criteria and process for identifying and establishing MPAs.

Paul Lansbergen, FCC President, said “Our primary concern is how Canada balances the desire to conserve and protect our precious ocean ecosystem while still generating much needed economic benefits from our bountiful fish resources.” He continued, “We must also remember that Canada is helping to feed the growing global population with a sustainable source of protein.”

FCC made three recommendations that recognize and build on existing elements of the processes for establishing individual MPAs and a broader network. However, the driver for these recommendations is to enhance the effort to strike the appropriate balance between conservation and socio-economic benefits.

The three recommendations are:

1. Use science-based decision making which recognizes the role of the fisheries sector in sustainable fisheries management and contributing to a healthy ocean ecosystem;
2. Incorporate the socio-economic consideration which recognizes the economic importance of the fisheries sector and other users; and,
3. Take a flexible approach in selecting the right conservation tool for the situation – regardless of it being under the Oceans Act, Fisheries Act, or other authority.

“This balance will be a more difficult struggle going forward. It will require more effort by all parties – governments, industry and other stakeholders”, Lansbergen said.

The Canadian seafood industry creates 80,000 direct jobs, mainly in coastal and rural communities, and accounts for \$6.6 billion in exports. 80 per cent of Canadian wild seafood production by value is certified by the Marine Stewardship Council, the international gold standard for measuring fishery sustainability.

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Since the Council was established in 1915, the Fisheries Council of Canada has been the national voice for Canada's commercial fisheries. Our members include small, medium and larger-sized companies along with Indigenous enterprises that harvest fish in Canada's three oceans and inland waters. Member companies are also processors who process the majority of Canada's fish and seafood production. FCC members take pride in being key employers in their communities, providing jobs and creating an economic base for other local businesses.

For further information: Fisheries Council of Canada, info@fisheriescouncil.org