



Fisheries Council of Canada looks for a clear and stable policy framework

OTTAWA, May 3, 2018 – Today, the Fisheries Council of Canada (FCC) appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and called for a clear and stable policy framework that will instill confidence to invest and support conservation.

The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans is examining Bill C-68, Amendments to the Fisheries Act. The Bill contains extensive amendments to restore lost protections from 2012 and to incorporate modern safeguards. It is part of the government’s review of environmental and regulatory processes.

Paul Lansbergen, FCC President, said “Our growth opportunities won’t be realized in the absence of a clear and stable policy framework. Unfortunately, this is currently lacking in Canadian fisheries.” He continued, “Taking away long-standing licences and quotas does not respect past investments and has eroded the sector’s confidence to invest and could undermine conservation efforts.”

The stability of access concern also creates a lens through which the sector views Bill C-68 and the pending regulations authorized by the Bill. FCC had three messages for the Committee:

1. FCC proposed an amendment to the Purpose clause of the Bill to better reference the sustainable use of fisheries as the primary intent of the Act.
2. In terms of reconciliation, FCC pointed to the findings of the recent *Ahousaht et al* decision by the BC Supreme Court. FCC believes there needs to be a clear process for involvement of other impacted stakeholder in co-management negotiations and a process in place to avoid a patchwork approach to management of a resource that undermines overall sustainability. In line with the court decision and the Crown’s own arguments in the case, FCC strongly believes the government needs to adhere to a willing-buyer/willing-seller policy as it has done historically for licence/quota reallocations.
3. FCC looks to how the new regulatory provisions can contribute to greater stability of access and thereby instill confidence to invest and support conservation.

“Given the enabling nature of the Bill, the Council reserved judgement on the Bill pending the development of the regulations authorized, which could take up to 3 years or more to be completed”, 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. Member companies are processors who process the majority of Canada's fish and seafood production. Our members include small, medium and larger-sized companies along with Indigenous enterprises that harvest fish in Canada's three oceans and inland waters. 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