



Pacific Region Commercial Fisheries

Responding to Socio-Economic Concerns

October 26, 2020



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Purpose

1. To provide an update on ongoing work to address socio-economic concerns related to the management of commercial fisheries in Pacific Region.
2. To seek your feedback on key issues and next steps.



Background

Multiple initiatives over the past several years proposed reviewing aspects of Pacific commercial fisheries licensing and management policies:

- Commercial Salmon Advisory Board interest in 2017 to review existing licensing policies and seek flexibilities in response to changing market conditions and uncertain salmon returns.
- The Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters Federation asked DFO to review the Pacific fisheries management regime and its effects on independent harvesters and coastal communities.
- The Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans study on Pacific coast commercial fisheries – *Sharing Risks and Benefits*.
- The BC Government's Wild Salmon Advisory Council which recommended strategies to protect and enhance the economic, social and cultural benefits to B.C. communities from seafood resources.



Background (continued)

A number of themes emerged from the recent initiatives:

- Increasing the transparency of fishing licence/quota holdings and restricting foreign ownership.
- Making the fishery more accessible to new entrants, especially younger individuals,
- Ensuring a fair distribution of benefits among those involved in the fishery.
- Ensuring that the benefits derived from fish harvesting flow to active fishers and communities in B.C.
- Providing more flexibility for harvesters to respond to changing circumstances.



Background (continued)

National Considerations

- Changes to the *Fisheries Act* affirmed the ability of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans to consider social, economic and cultural factors in the management of fisheries.
- The federal government committed to strengthening inshore fisheries policies on the Atlantic coast to help ensure that the economic benefits of fishing remain with the licence holders and their community.
- There are divergent views on whether Atlantic inshore fisheries policies should be extended to the Pacific Fisheries.
- So far, there appears to be broad support for developing a “made in B.C.” solution and ensuring that specific measures are appropriate for Pacific fisheries.



Recent Recommendations

Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans

The standing committee report contains 20 recommendations related to the following:

- Improving the transparency of licence/quota holdings and transactions
- Excluding non-Canadian beneficial owners from the fishery
- Reducing barriers to entry for new Canadian harvesters
- Supporting independent active fish harvesters and an equitable allocation of benefits from the fishery
- Encouraging value-added fish processing in B.C. communities
- Establishing a new policy development engagement process with all key stakeholders
- Collecting socio-economic data to inform regulatory decisions



Recent Recommendations

B.C. Wild Salmon Advisory Council

One of the council's recommendations states:

B.C.'s position should include similar objectives as in Atlantic Canada, such as:

- The importance of maintaining an independent and economically viable fleet
- Preventing and, over time, eliminating corporate and foreign control of licences and quota so that active fishers retain control of their fishing enterprises
- Ensuring that the benefits of fishing flow to the active fish harvester and to communities
- Over time, landed value retained exclusively by harvesters and not by others



Current Status

A number of actions have been taken or are planned:

- Report prepared by DFO on Pacific fisheries regulations, policies, and practices affecting the distribution of benefits derived from commercial fisheries.
- Contract awarded to conduct a comparative analysis of commercial fisheries on Canada's Atlantic and Pacific coasts.
- National review of DFO's foreign ownership policies, to include gathering information on beneficial interest of Pacific Region commercial fishing licences and quota.
- Legal and technical issues being explored regarding transparent public access to additional licence and quota holding information.
- Assessment of socio-economic information gaps and options to address them being planned.
- Consultations with First Nations and stakeholders planned on options for addressing socio-economic concerns.



Next Steps

Proposed Approach to Consultations

Three types of engagement:

- First Nations – Initial focus on determining how First Nations commercial fishing interests will engage in consultations and whether communal commercial access is within/beyond the scope of this initiative.
- Fisheries advisory committees – The topic of addressing socio-economic concerns related to the management of commercial fisheries will be scheduled for discussion at regular advisory committee meetings.
- Workshops & meetings – An independent facilitator will be contracted to lead a series of workshops and meetings involving First Nations and a diversity of commercial fishery interests



Next Steps (continued)

Fall 2020 – Fisheries Advisory Committee Meetings

- Background information, initial identification of priority topics and feedback on proposed approach to consultations.

Fall 2020 – Comparative Analysis

- Complete comparative analysis report on Atlantic and Pacific coast fisheries management and licensing regimes.

2021 - Facilitated workshops / meetings

- Series of workshops and meetings with First Nations and Stakeholders aimed at developing recommendations to address socio-economic concerns.
- Review recommendations from recent reports

Fall 2021 - Recommendations

- Submit recommendations to Minister on licensing and management reforms.



Questions

DFO is interested in gathering preliminary views from commercial fisheries interests to inform our planning for future engagement.

- What are the main socio-economic concerns in your fishery?
- Do you have comments on the proposed approach to consultations with First Nations and stakeholders?