



## COVID-19 Active Fishermen's Committee

### Report on Activities

On March 25, UFAWU-Unifor invited active fishermen, from all fisheries and organizations, to a 'virtual meeting' regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on fishermen. One hundred and fifty fishermen participated in the 'meeting' and spent three hours discussing how COVID-19 might impact commercial fisheries. Twenty-seven active fishermen or reps from active fishermen's organizations from most commercial fisheries in BC agreed to sit on a committee to develop actions on COVID-19 issues.

The committee decided to call itself the **COVID-19 Active Fishermen's Committee (CVAFC)** and adopted the following as Terms of Reference:

- The committee's interest is to deal with issues arising from the Coronavirus pandemic related to fisheries
- This committee is made up of active fishermen and fishermen's reps
- The committee will respect different areas of fishing interest
- The committee will meet with other groups (processors – BCSA – FN – AVICC/CCN – PICFI program) and arrive at positions of common support
- The committee's goals are to protect fishermen and our communities while having fair and viable fisheries
- The committee is not to create fishing plans or management changes for different fisheries.
- The committee's function is to help fishermen deal with the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic

CVAFC also developed a set of principles to help guide fisheries management policy changes:

- a. Fisheries are an essential service and every effort should be made for fisheries to go ahead in order to support food security.
- b. Whatever measures are taken to get us through this situation will be temporary and only for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic ONLY. There will be **no permanent** changes of fisheries management policy due to this unusual situation.
- c. Whatever changes are put in place **must support active fishermen and promote equitable opportunities**. Those who actually harvest the fish are the key producers of seafood for the country, and any changes should promote their interests.
- d. Encourage Government and fishing organizations that **leasing arrangements made prior to pandemic** be reviewed.
- e. The impact of any changes implemented to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic **support, as best as possible, equitable distribution of benefits** for all active fishermen in a fishery.

COVID-19 Active Fishermen's Committee (CVAFC) has produced a set of Fishermen-Community Interaction Protocols developed to protect fishermen and communities in a COVID-19 environment. This was created mostly with the smaller boat fleet in mind, but will be very useful for everyone. After input from fishermen's organizations and processors we have sent them to the Province and municipalities for comment. We hope that they will guide active fishermen's interactions with communities.

**The Protocols are attached to this email.**

CVAFC has been liaising with the Canadian Independent Fish Harvester's Federation and, through them, the small Canada-wide Minister and Deputy Minister's Commercial Fisheries Committee. Jim McIsaac is the west coast representative on both committees and reports to the CVAFC.

CVAFC raised the issue of fishermen's coverage for CERB through the Canadian Federation of Independent Fish Harvesters and achieved assurances that fishermen were covered by CERB after any EI had expired.

Through the UFAWU, CVAFC has been liaising with the Seafood Alliance with an industry-wide request to set up a Task Force to work with the Province on commercial fishing issues. Through our efforts, we are assured that a Task Force or Working Group is being seriously considered by the Province.

CVAFC has also developed a draft set of recommendations to the Federal and Provincial governments regarding those things that fishermen need to keep themselves and their boats together if they do not go fishing (grants/loans, EI for this year and next, moorage costs etc) and those things that need addressing (lease fees, markets, landed value, processor bankruptcies) if fishermen do go fishing.

Updates: COVID-19 Fisheries Committee FB Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/534898490756891/>

Sincerely,

Chris Ashton	ED BC Salmon Purse Seiners Association	Rep
Bob Burkosky	Lingcod Assn; Area C Gillnet Harvest Committee	Rep Active
Helen-Anne Beans	Salmon Seine; prawns; herring gillnet	FN Active
Phil Burgess	President Pacific Shrimp Fishermen's Association	Active
Duncan Cameron	BC Crab Fishermen's Crab Assn; Crab, Prawn	Rep Active
Henderson Charley		
Mike Emes	Area C gillnet	Active
Dan Edwards	ED Area A Crab Association; BC Crab Fishermen's Assn; dogfish, halibut, sablefish	Rep Active
Jon Hunter	Area F Troll Assn	Rep Active
Gustave Johnson	Tuna- Canada and US; Area F and G Troll	Active
Guy Johnston	Prawn Industry Caucus; Area H Harvest Committee; Area F troll	Rep Active
James Lawson	Salmon Seine; prawns; geoduck; crabs	FN; Active
Pam Lewis	Secretary-Treasurer, Native Brotherhood of BC	FN Rep
Kyle Louis	IMAWG Board of Directors; Area I Crab; herring gillnet; salmon gillnet Areas D & E; prawns	FN; Active FN Rep
Stuart Malcolm	Area F Troll Harvest Committee; troll	Rep Active
Jim McIsaac	ED Commercial Fishing Caucus; Pacific VP Canadian Independent Fish Harvesters Federation; GTAC; HIAB	Rep
Dave McKay	President Area F Troll Assn; Area F Harvest Committee; salmon troll, gillnet, halibut	Rep Active
Eddie Mise	Packer; salmon, herring	Active
Andy Olson	ED Native Fishing Association: FA salmon gillnet herring halibut rockfish shrimp	Rep
Emily Orr	Prawn Industry Caucus	Rep
John Stevens	Gillnet Areas C and D	Active
Tony Roberts	President, Native Brotherhood of BC	FN Rep
Lance Underwood	ED BC Crab Fishermen's Association; Area G Crab Representative; prawn	Rep Active
Brian Wadhams	Area D Gillnet; Alert Bay	FN; Active
Ed Willson	Area C Gillnet; Bella Coola	Active
Joy Thorkelson (Chair)	President, UFAWU-Unifor	Rep
Josh Young	Herring Industry Advisory Board; Area F troll; Area C and D gillnet; Halibut; ZN	Rep Active