

# Bulletin

September 2023

## The Tasks Ahead for New Minister Lebouthillier

As Diane Lebouthillier assumes her new role as Fisheries Minister, fish harvesters and coastal communities will look to her to tackle hugely consequential issues and spearhead positive change in the industry.

Lebouthillier will oversee the DFO, who's mandate dictates that the department must "work with fishers, coastal, and Indigenous communities to enable their continued prosperity from fish and seafood."

Currently, many commercial fish harvesters in BC are confronting challenges that jeopardize their livelihoods, coastal communities, and way of life. It will be up to the new minister to address these issues:

### Decisions Not Based On Science

Harvesters have faced significant impacts due to fishery closures and delays by DFO, many of which have disregarded science. Most notable were the 2021 PSSSI closures, in which a sweeping decision led to the blanket closure of 79 salmon fisheries in BC. Since these closures, harvesters have witnessed the deeply concerning trend of decisions made without regard for stock assessment or

science-based rationale, in the form of flawed Marine Protected Area (MPA) closures, unjustified cuts to herring fisheries, recent unwarranted Chinook fishery delays, and more.

### Foreign Ownership

Foreign ownership and beneficial interest in Pacific Region fisheries are under increased scrutiny with the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans' current study of

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## CFC Seine Bargaining: Vote on CA

As of publication, the vote on the 2023 Collective Agreement between the Canadian Fishing Company and UFAWU-Unifor is currently live online.

A full CFC Seine Bargaining update bulletin has also been published, containing important information on the price agreement, benefits, and increased transparency in the 2023 Collective Agreement.

CFC Seine Harvesters, please take a moment to review the full bulletin,

then vote on the 2023 Collective Agreement.

Voting on the 2023 Collective Agreement is very important and the process only takes a matter of seconds.

The vote is a secret ballot and your name will not be associated with your vote.

The UFAWU-Unifor Negotiation Committee recommends you vote YES on the 2023 Collective Agreement.

Visit [UFAWU-Unifor.org](http://UFAWU-Unifor.org) to access the full bulletin.

To vote, visit [ufawu-vote.netlify.app](http://ufawu-vote.netlify.app).

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the matter. A report of the findings of the Committee is expected to be released this Fall. In 2018, \$60 million in licenses and quotas were sold, with foreign purchasers responsible for \$30 million of that. Currently, only 1.2% of quota holders own 50% of ground-fish quota. DFO and First Nations have found themselves in direct competition with foreign investors to acquire licenses and quotas in order to meet reconciliation objectives.

### **OO Licensing Policy**

To ensure the benefits of commercial fisheries flow to the fishers engaged in fishing, the West Coast needs to adopt an Owner Operator licensing policy. Such a policy could target inshore fisheries, protecting the livelihoods of small-scale fishers and supporting Canadian harvesters.

### **Labour Force & Labour Force Adjustment**

Many DFO Policies have been implemented with little concern for harvesters. When the PSSI unexpectedly closed 60% of salmon fisheries, many fishers experi-

enced financial distress after having invested heavily in preparation. No support was planned for these harvesters. A Labour Force Adjustment Program for displaced salmon harvesters would lessen the harm to fishers and their coastal communities.

### **Navigating Areas Declared Closed by First Nations Exercising Self-Determination**

Recently, questions pertaining to areas declared closed by First Nations exercising Self-Determination and IPCAs have arisen. These questions, regarding procedure, scope, authority and access within these areas remain unaddressed by DFO. DFO has pointed toward relationship building between First Nations and the Commercial Harvest Sector to negotiate an agreeable path forward. However, these two sectors are not entirely distinct from one another; they overlap greatly. The existence of productive relationships which are already well established does not remove DFO's obligation to provide structure and clear communication of regulations and protocols with regard to fishery access.

### **Unaddressed FOPO Recommendations**

In 2019, the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans (FOPO) released a report titled "West Coast Fisheries: Sharing Risks and Benefits." Comprised of 20 recommendations, the report was created to address many of the challenges facing both fisheries and commercial fishermen. Despite a call to action from the commercial fishing community following its release, the response to FOPO's recommendations from the DFO has been lackluster.

### **Looking Forward**

The commercial fishing industry is facing a broad and difficult range of issues including DFO's politics-based decision-making, foreign ownership, a lack of labour force adjustment, and much more. Amid these challenges, a new Fisheries Minister presents an opportunity for change. Lebouthillier has the power to steer the commercial fishing industry toward a brighter future for fishers and coastal communities. With the boundless optimism of fish harvesters, our hopes are high.

## **Connected Coast Releases Summer Update**

The Connected Coast Project is an initiative to bring internet services to rural and remote areas in coastal BC using subsea fibre optic cable.

The route of the cable intercepts with prawn fishing grounds, and once laid the cable must be avoided.

The project has released its Summer 2023 Update which includes important information relevant to fish harvesters including updates on cable locations.

According to Connected Coast, "signage alerting mariners of the new fibre cable network on BC's seafloor has been created and posted in high-traffic dock locations."

Digital maps of cable locations are also available on the connected website.

For the full Connected Coast Summer 2023 Update, visit [connectedcoast.ca/summer-2023-update](https://connectedcoast.ca/summer-2023-update).



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United Fishermen & Allied Workers' Union

Visit [UFAWU-Unifor.org](https://UFAWU-Unifor.org) for more information.