



P.E.I. FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION LTD.

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The Prince Edward Island Fishermen's Association (PEIFA) represents the interests of 1300 core fishers on Prince Edward Island. The association is dedicated to making positive changes in the fishery so that current and future generations can remain active and financially viable in the fishing sector for many years to come.

One of the most impactful and effective methods to improve our multiple species fishery, is the permanent retirement of licenses that allows those who want to exit the fishery the ability to leave in a dignified and planned manner.

The primary objectives of our proposed rationalization program are as follows:

- 1) To enhance the sustainability of our multi species resources
- 2) To add additional conservation measures to existing conservation programs
- 3) To ensure we have sustainable fisheries that can meet the demands of global seafood markets
- 4) To ensure eco certifications are obtained and maintained
- 5) To ensure effective fishing efforts are achieved
- 6) To create higher income opportunities for those remaining in the fishery and to create and enhance existing jobs particularly in coastal communities

These goals are consistent with recommendations of the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council (FRCC) that states that one of the main goals in improving various fisheries is the reduction of fleet numbers.

The FRCC also recommended that the following outcomes be sought through fleet reductions. Many of these initiatives have taken place or are planned for the near future.

- 1) Increasing viability of the fleets
- 2) Increased biological viability of the area
- 3) Increased use Electronic monitoring and date collection
- 4) Reduction of gear being fished
- 5) Shorter fishing seasons
- 6) Combining licenses to reduce environmental footprints

The PEIFA has been one of the leading organizations in Atlantic Canada in fleet reductions. For example the LFA 26A bordering Prince Edwards Island has achieved the following results over the past 5 years:

33 lobster licenses have been retired at 300 traps per license. In addition each individual fisher in this area also gave up an additional 28 lobster traps per active license. These two reductions resulted in over 19800 traps being removed from the water.

These reductions were part of a detailed and comprehensive program that considered 7 key components.

These components were:

- 1) Over-capacity in an area
- 2) Core License retirement request
- 3) Multi Species retirement request
- 4) Residual viability of the core Fishing Enterprise
- 5) Location of license activity – region, area or fishing area specific
- 6) Fisher age
- 7) Fisher health

The reduction in traps and licenses have increased catches for many harvesters and increased their overall economic viability in a positive manner. Positive environmental impacts were also significant as a result of this rationalization program.

As noted above, the PEIFA has an effective, proven and implementation ready program that can be applied other species.

Now that the lobster industry is trending in a positive direction, a joint PEIFA / Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) rationalization document has set priorities to also rationalize groundfish, herring, mackerel and tuna licenses. This does not mean that lobster fleet rationalization is complete, however a focus on these additional species will achieve two goals. One will be to bring the number of licenses much more in-line with available quota and the second focus is to further increase the economic viability of those captains remaining in those fisheries. At present many of the secondary fisheries last only several weeks or just a few days before the quota is caught by the large number of harvesters

licensed in those fisheries. Many operating costs and carbon footprints can be reduced significantly when trips result in increased catches and a reduction in the number of trips.

In 2015, the PEIFA embarked on a rationalization plan to eliminate groundfish licenses through a confidential buy out process that has seen some limited success. However to make a significant impact, hundreds of licenses need to be retired over a much shorter time period. This can only be achieved by an injection of additional funding to complement the financial resources that the PEIFA is allocating towards this rationalization program.

A federal contribution of 3M towards the retirement of groundfish licenses and 7.5M towards the retirement of tuna licenses would have significant positive impacts on these fisheries. These are two species where the number of licenses far exceeds the amount of available quota.

In summation, the PEIFA feels that by having funding in place for rationalization programs, this will allow impactful rationalization to take place as a number of long time fishers consider their exist from the fishery over the next 5 to 10 years. All active licenses have been issued by the Federal government and we are seeking the assistance of the Federal government to help bring back balance to these targeted fisheries.

In addition this type of proactive approach gets away from the crisis management style that has plagued our Canadian fishing industry for many, many years.

As an active participant of the Federal Seafood Value Chain Roundtable, the PEIFA is aware that the Canadian seafood industry has been identified as one of the primary areas for international export growth through increasing export volumes and more importantly increasing export value.

The Canadian inshore fleet is a key component of this growth strategy. By increasing the economic viability of the inshore fleet on Prince Edward Island the achievement of these goals will be attainable for the federal government and the people of Canada.