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—
Chair

Mr. Fabian Manning

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• (0905)

[English]

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews (Random—Burin—St. George's, Lib.)): Good morning. I'd like to call the meeting to order.

First of all, I'd like to apologize for Mr. Manning, who is unavoidably absent. I'm filling in for him this morning.

I'd like to welcome to our committee this morning Mr. Toomasie and Mr. Earle, who are here in person. Joining us on the line are three other witnesses: Mr. Kilabuk, Mr. Kalluk, and Mr. Akeegok. I hope my pronunciation was satisfactory and acceptable.

Mr. Toomasie will give a five-minute opening statement, and then our three guests who are on the line with us will give five-minute opening statements.

I'd like to say to all our witnesses that we welcome you this morning. The committee looks forward to hearing your testimony.

Before we begin, I'd like to tell you that all political parties represented in the House of Commons are present here this morning. This committee has demonstrated a great interest in small craft harbours, and we very much look forward to hearing what you have to say to the committee.

We will proceed, beginning with Mr. Toomasie, please.

Mr. Lootie Toomasie (Chairman, Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Association): Thank you, and thank you to the committee here this morning. Thank you for inviting us to Ottawa. I appreciate your inviting us to this fisheries committee.

My name is Lootie Toomasie, and I am from Qikiqtarjuaq on Broughton Island in Nunavut. I also was the mayor for 12 years, and I finished my term back in 2006. I have been to different standing committees like this in Parliament a few times before. I'm here with the fisheries committee this time. Thank you very much for giving us this opportunity, and anybody else as well.

Harry Earle is with me this morning, and he is our fisheries adviser.

My community is located along the Davis Strait in central Baffin Island. It's a small community of 550 people, but everything we need for a community is there. We have health centres, wireless Internet, and all that.

We don't have everything that we need, actually. Just to open my statement, my community has had a fishing quota for a long time but has never reached a benefit. I'll describe that once I go through my

statement. We don't get a benefit at all, even though we have had a quota for some time now.

All the fishing boats went to Greenland that were fishing in the Davis Strait. That means there were 12,000 tonnes going to Greenland that we suspect should have been landed in Canada. They should have been landed in Canada, but they were landed there, because we don't have a port, as simple as it is.

That's a long story, but I'll make it short.

Once again, we need facilities up in the Arctic. In my community, we are closest to where the fish stocks are located right now, and that means...[Inaudible—Editor]. If you look at the map, if you have maps, we are closest to where most of the fish are. I am speaking about my community, and I'm trying to be very specific in what I say. I mentioned 12,000 tonnes that go to Greenland and that don't get landed in Canada, and that we don't get the benefit for.

• (0910)

Let's go to small craft harbours. Right now we have a small craft harbour that only fits small domestic boats, community boats, but it needs expansion.

As I mentioned in my introduction, I was mayor for 12 years. I have been involved in this issue from the beginning. Back in 1981 I was involved in how our community would lobby to have this small craft harbour and how it should be built at that time. It is too small now to have those fishing boats come in. So we need to upgrade and expand our current small craft harbour.

This is in the plan now. It is the cheapest small craft harbour that has been planned in those seven communities at this moment. It will only cost \$2 million. In comparison, costs for other communities are much higher.

As I mentioned, it is in the plan now. This past summer, Government of Nunavut representatives, I believe they were, were in my community to survey what is required and what they will need to know before they build the expansion. They built the lighting system this summer and past fall. That's the only thing that has happened so far on this plan.

Even though so far we have fishing boats coming into our community, they anchor their boats in the channel. We live on the island, but the mainland is on the other side. They anchor their boats because we don't have a small craft harbour that fits.

I'm sorry, I think I have gone beyond five minutes, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you.

•(0915)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much, Mr. Toomasie.

Before we go to our first guest on the line, Mr. Kilabuk, I'm going to ask those people waiting online if they could try to be as quiet as possible, because it's causing some cracking on the line, and it's interfering with our listening here. So for those of you who are online from the north, try, if you could, to be as quiet as you can, because it is causing a problem for us.

Now we will go to Mr. Kilabuk.

I'd like to say again to our guests online that we would appreciate your trying to stay within your five-minute timeframe, please, because we're listening to four presenters this morning and we want to get to a round of questions and answers afterwards. I would ask you to try to stay as close to five minutes as possible.

Mr. Kilabuk, please.

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk (Chairman, Ikajutit Hunters and Trappers Organization): Thank you very much.

Good morning to you all. This is Tommy Kilabuk from Arctic Bay. I want to say good morning to all and thank you very much for allowing us from Arctic Bay to take part in this meeting this morning. It's good to visit Ottawa over the phone, but I believe you are warmer than we are in Arctic Bay. We're dipping around minus forty degrees Celsius right now, but that's the reality of our world up here.

Yes, we have some concerns in our community that we're going to express to the standing committee this morning, and this is from a hunters and trappers organization from Arctic Bay. We are asking if the boundary line from OA, which is at the mouth of Lancaster Sound, could be moved to the Nunavut boundary line to the west, pass through Lancaster and through the Northwest Passage, so that Arctic Bay could be included in the OA boundary. We're looking forward to doing some turbot fishing and all that.

Since the economy for the sealing has been affected again by Europeans, we are asking the standing committee if it could be considered to move the OA boundary line from where it is now to the Nunavut boundary line so that our small community could be included in that boundary line for turbot fishing and marine fishing through our territory.

Also, we are looking for a small craft harbour in our community, which is needed for domestic use and for commercial use, for sealifts that come to our community. It's always hard for sealifts to unload and all that, because they're just unloading right to our community shoreline. And time is always affected too due to that. If we could have a small craft harbour, that would really help the community and the people who are coming into our community on sea, by boat, so that they could unload quicker, and we could use it for commercial use too.

Another issue we're facing every day in our community—and that is one of the concerns—is the cost of items that come to our community by sealift. I think we should have a better support and reduction on the marine navigation service fee, which I believe is about 18 times higher than for the people who are below the 60

degrees latitude. I believe we could have a better support on that, because the cost of living up here is tremendous. I believe the standing committee can help us on that, so that the cost of living up here could be reduced.

Also, to give an explanation of Arctic Bay, we're about 760 people, and about half of us, 60% to 70%, are unemployed. Due to that, we're looking for help so that we could do some marine fishing and all that. If the boundary line OA could be moved, that's one of our biggest issues here in Arctic Bay.

I thank you very much for allowing me to talk this morning. This is Tommy signing off from Arctic Bay. Thank you.

•(0920)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much, Mr. Kilabuk, for your presentation. Thanks for staying within the time of five minutes. You did that, so thank you.

Now we go to Mr. Isaac Kalluk, please.

Mr. Isaac Kalluk (Chairman, Resolute Bay Hunters and Trappers Association): Thank you very much.

Good morning to you all. Thanks for inviting us to share our concerns on this very important matter.

Up here in Resolute Bay, Nunavut, in the High Arctic, we have about 260 people, and about 10% are unemployed. We would like to get this going, if it could be at all possible. Our main concern is that we would be mostly interested in offshore. There's a rumour saying that Lancaster Sound might become a park in the future, but still we're going to keep going. It would be very important for us here in Resolute Bay, the most northern community in the High Arctic. It would not only be important to us, but it would also be good for all of Canada to keep our sovereignty more effective later on.

I don't have too much more. We would like to see this go through the standing committee. It would bring a little more money to the community. It would be very good for us, because this is harsh country that we live in, and isolated.

That's about all I have to say. Thank you very much.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much, Mr. Kalluk, again for your presentation.

We'll now go to Mr. Akeegok of the Iviq Hunters and Trappers Association, please.

Mr. Jaypetee Akeegok (Chairman, Iviq Hunters and Trappers Association): Hi, there are two of us here. I am Jaypetee Akeegok of Iviq Hunters and Trappers Association from Grise Fjord.

Good morning. It's still dark here, by the way, as you might know from the location of our community.

In case the committee members don't know, Grise Fjord has a population of 140 people, and it is also one of the few communities that have not benefited greatly from decentralization or separation. When Nunavut separated from the NWT, none of the opportunities ever came here. So in this community the hunters and trappers organization is very active in trying to help our population here. About 90% of the people in the community here are hunters, so we have been actively involved in seeing how we can have an economic base. The only job opportunities here are in basic community services: water, sewer, municipal services. You also have the co-op.

What we have seen in the past is that some of the people who have graduated have moved out because the opportunities are not here—and 90% of the hunters would greatly benefit from renewable resources, such as deep-sea fishing and the other renewable wildlife here. We have an active outfitting company here, but that's very seasonal, so we are trying to expand and to see how this community can benefit from turbot and shrimp deep-sea fishing facilities.

Last year we tried to apply for a quota for this community, but we were denied by the OA. However, we would like to proceed and be more involved in the deep-sea industry, as we know our hunters will have to seek other avenues to get further economic opportunities for themselves in order to enjoy the same benefits as other Canadians. So we will be seeking the same opportunities as other communities. Actually, we might work more closely with...*[Inaudible—Editor]*...to try to obtain quotas, however we can do it.

On small craft harbours, as I indicated, our community members here are hunters and we have lost four or five domestic boats, and those are more important assets for bringing food to the table. Without our...*[Inaudible—Editor]*...we feel that there are going to be no other job opportunities provided. Even the food we try to put on the table decreases, because we have strong winds here. We cannot unload and do what basic farmers in Canada do easily; we have to work four or five times harder to maintain our assets.

• (0925)

Another topic I would like to very briefly touch upon is that I have the same concern about this community being charged an extra \$1,200, I believe, per tonne. I might be wrong on that, but we're being charged more for sealift to get our food and yearly supplies here than other communities. I believe it's 18% higher than in Iqaluit itself, because we are in the wrong location. The federal government have been indicating that because they have to bring in the icebreaker with our sealift, they give us a surcharge on all the goods that are being delivered here during summer.

So we are politely and strongly saying that it would be a lot of help if they could delete that extra surcharge. Other communities, even in the St. Lawrence, are enjoying those icebreakers more than we do, and they're not being charged for the services being provided to get our sealift up here.

I believe my five minutes are up. I would like to thank you once again for an opportunity to give our presentation through a telephone.

• (0930)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much.

You're on a speakerphone, so obviously there are other people listening with you, are there not, Jaypetee?

Mr. Jaypetee Akeagok: Yes. In my opening statement I mentioned that our secretary/manager, Lydia Noah, is here with me. There are two of us in our office here.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): The reason I ask is that there seems to be some problem at times with hearing you. I didn't want to ask you to shut off the speakerphone and go just to the phone. We'll tolerate it so that your people can listen.

Thank you very much for that.

We're now going to go to a round of questioning by all parties. We're going to start with the Liberal Party for 10 minutes, with Mr. Scott Simms.

Mr. Simms, please.

Mr. Scott Simms (Bonavista—Gander—Grand Falls—Windsor, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to say welcome to all of our guests, both online and here with us in person.

I want to start out by talking about the infrastructure itself and the usage of the infrastructure. You said there are certain types of vessels that cannot take advantage of the infrastructure you have right now. I think, Mr. Toomasie, that's something that you brought up.

Could you elaborate on this, as to the vessel types and essentially where the problem lies?

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Thank you.

Yes, I mentioned in my statement that the only type of boat that fits into our current infrastructure is a maximum of about a 30-foot boat.

Mr. Scott Simms: A maximum of 30 feet?

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Yes, a boat beyond 30 feet does not fit in there. It's very small.

Mr. Scott Simms: What do they go now to...?

Go ahead.

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Thank you.

They use this existing harbour only for local hunters. That one is not fit for commercial fishing. I mentioned the boats anchored in the channel, but they can't even go near the existing breakwater now.

Mr. Scott Simms: Where do boats that are longer than 30 feet go now to get access for commercial reasons, particularly about OA?

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: I'll have Harry Earle, fishery adviser, answer your question.

Mr. Harry Earle (Arctic Fisheries Alliance): The larger fishing boats, which range from about 100 feet in length up to 200 feet, all go to Greenland to off-load. Basically, the entire turbot quota is off-loaded in Greenland, except that usually on the last trip they bring it back to Newfoundland.

Mr. Scott Simms: So you're talking about anything above 30 feet.

Mr. Harry Earle: That's right.

Mr. Scott Simms: Interesting.

Mr. Akeagok and Mr. Kalluk, one of you mentioned a surcharge. I'm interested in hearing quickly about this surcharge that is levied upon you by the coast guard. Is that correct?

● (0935)

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk: Yes, they do. When our sealifts arrive either in late August or September, our annual sealifts of dry goods and whatever the store requires, they start charging a surcharge to bring in icebreakers with the contracted shipper.

Mr. Scott Simms: Who pays for that right now? Does your association pay that surcharge?

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk: It would be whoever does the ordering on the sealifts, such as the co-op or any individual who does their annual sealift that they would store for the winter. Even individuals have to pay that surcharge that they put on us.

Mr. Scott Simms: It can be quite a bit.

One of the things we talked about here, amongst many things, is the access to revenue by which you survive, which I'm sure is probably a bigger issue for you than it is for any of us on the east or west coast. What is the situation?

Mr. Earle, I'll start out with you, and Mr. Toomasie as well.

For infrastructure that exists in OA, what do you take in as revenue? What are your primary sources?

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: With the current breakwater that we have, we are not getting any benefit from that right now, because commercial boaters can't land there at all anyway. We use this only domestically, and we don't charge the local hunters, because it's very small.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay.

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: If I'm not quite clear about this, if you have any further questions, I'll have Harry explain further.

Mr. Harry Earle: There is revenue from the offshore fishing, the turbot fishing. Basically, some communities get royalties, and also jobs for the workers, for the crewmen in the boat. But probably the most important benefits would be if they could off-load. The fish is all frozen at sea, and when it's frozen on the boat, it's shipped to....

The market is in the Far East—Japan, and so forth. If they could off-load the boats in Canada, there could be additional revenue in transshipping that product out of the coast of Nunavut. The obvious transshipment point would be to bring it back, perhaps to St. Anthony, which is the closest port in Canada with a cold storage.

That would evolve into a two-way trade, because you would have fish going south and supplies going north. That's very important for the communities to keep down the costs, two-way trade.

Mr. Scott Simms: Okay.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Mr. Byrne.

Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.): Thank you very much to our witnesses for their very informative presentations.

One of the things that each and every one of you hit upon was that the need in the north is for multi-use wharves, not just to service inshore small boat fishing activity but to service offshore fishing activity, to allow or facilitate the supply transport—the vital supplies of groceries, hardware, other things to sustain the community. As well, there was mention of the ability to service industrial things, such as mining.

With respect to all of these wharves from all of the communities, what's been struck upon by you as leaders from the community is that you need more than just fishing wharves; you need something that's engineered to be able to meet all of those community-based needs.

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans, in its small craft harbours program, which is really what we're studying, is only interested in supplying harbour wharf infrastructure to service the fishing industry, and mostly the small boat industry. That, I think, causes some concern.

As expert witnesses from the community, would you be able to relate once again the need for multi-use wharves and how important that is to be able to service offshore fisheries, inshore fisheries, to facilitate the supply of goods, groceries, and hardware, as well as other industrial things?

Could you also comment on engineering requirements? The north is experiencing climate change. That's causing loose ice conditions, which from a structural point of view, when you build a harbour, a wharf into the ocean, the needs of today from an engineering point of view are probably.... We'd like to hear from you on this. Are the needs of today different from the needs of yesterday, from an engineering point of view, for the wharves that would be built?

Mr. Toomasie, would you begin?

● (0940)

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, I was mayor for 12 years in the past, up to 2006. In the middle of the 1990s, the fisheries and oceans standing committee came to my community. I think it was around 1995 to 1997.

In my statement at that time, I spoke about how we needed a deepwater port in our community. At that time, this OA was under way for a survey. We didn't want to be left behind for the kinds of opportunity that we were hoping to get from this offshore fishing. We wanted to be part of generating the benefit for Canada as a whole. So I started lobbying for a deepwater port back then.

A few years down the road, one of the staff—I will not mention the name; I just want to try to make it understandable—came to walk with me when I walked into the airport in Iqaluit. He said, this time you're getting a port. But right after that, a few months later, it completely changed. Then I'm not getting a port this time.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Who was that, Mr. Toomasie?

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: That was just said generally. I would not worry about the name of the person.

But during the consultation—I think it was the consultation with the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans—the chairman at that time was a very kind person, and they were very good at getting to *[Inaudible—Editor]* on this. He was supportive. This person supported the view that we deserved to have a port in the community, because we're closest to the fishing area, the OA, where the survey was being done at that time.

Then somehow, at this table here, this guy was voted from his... *[Inaudible—Editor]*. From that time, our lobbying issue was completely dead. That's how it happened.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much, Mr. Byrne.

A little bit later on we'll come back to Mr. Byrne's question on climate change and the effect you see it's having in your area.

Now we're going to go to Mr. Blais of the Bloc Québécois, for seven minutes, please.

• (0945)

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good morning, gentleman, who come from virtually everywhere. You protect nothing more or less than a fishing area near Greenland. On the one hand, your small facilities do not give you broader access to the fishing area, and, on the other hand, most of the large ships fishing in those areas land their catches in Greenland. That results in monetary losses.

First, I'd really like to understand the strategic and geographic position you occupy. What is the economic value of this area? I suppose you don't get the impression we really help you, in view of your strategic position. That strategic geographic position should normally be considered first. In that sense, you should already have the deep water wharves you've been seeking for a number of years now.

What steps have you taken in recent years to have that strategic geographic position recognized?

[English]

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Yes, thank you very much for asking the question.

This morning I have to speak in my second language, which is not as easy as if I were speaking in my own first language. I just want to be understandable.

Since my fisheries adviser has been working on this legal stuff, he has some briefing notes and so on. I want to have him respond to you. Thank you.

Mr. Harry Earle: Just to give you an order of magnitude, let's look at the 12,000 tonnes of turbot caught in the area called OA and OB. When the fish are landed and shipped out, they're worth roughly \$50 million American. Most of those fish are landed over in Greenland.

Typically when vessels go into port, in addition to off-loading fish, they'll take on fuel and supplies, change crews, and make repairs. In my experience in dealing with vessels in the Arctic, parties will spend another \$4 million, \$5 million, or \$6 million in those activities. That would generate secondary industries such as machine shops, welding, and different activities—much as you find, at least back in my home province in Newfoundland, communities that handle offshore vessels. Qikiqtarjuaq is less than 100 miles from most of the fishing. It's fairly close to the fishing area and directly across from the coast of Greenland. We're only 200 miles away, so it's not a very large distance.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: Thank you.

Earlier you mentioned that our committee had previously had the opportunity to hear from you. You belong to a territory called Nunavut; you have a government. I can quite readily imagine that that government supports your demands, except that it is funded by Canada. That's what I understand.

What steps have been taken in recent years? Have you simply been listened to, without any real measures being taken?

• (0950)

[English]

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Could we answer the question once again?

Mr. Harry Earle: I think the Government of Nunavut has been listening. Really, it's a matter of funding. Primarily, these harbours are a source of federal funding. That is why they have...*[Inaudible—Editor]*...as well.

Does that answer your question?

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Blais: No. I wanted to know the history of financial demands concerning wharves, because this isn't the first time we've talked about this matter. The demands no doubt go back a number of years; they didn't start today.

[English]

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: The port...*[Inaudible—Editor]*...I mentioned to you this morning. But as for the deepwater port, I turned it down, because the deepwater port is not coming from the local government; it has to come from the federal government. I completely turned down the deepwater port for that reason. But for the small craft harbour, they're planning, but the present plan is five years down the road. We need it now in order to accommodate the needs for the present fishing in the Davis Strait.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you, Mr. Toomasie.

Mr. Stoffer now from the New Democratic Party, for five minutes, please.

Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks to all of you for appearing before us today.

Just a reminder to the committee that Resolute and Grise Fiord are resettlement communities from the early 1950s. People were taken from northern Quebec and moved up there to assert Canadian sovereignty. After my visit up there, I always like to think Canada should try to work with these communities to improve their livelihood so we could have a permanent settlement and not have young people move away. One of the areas we're discussing is infrastructure. If you have the infrastructure, then you can have access to whatever resources are up there to improve your livelihood, because everything is very expensive.

Tommy, Isaac, and Jaypetee, I want to let you know that this committee moved a resolution, I believe a year or two ago, to have the Government of Canada remove the marine service fees, as they're called. Those discussions are ongoing with Mr. George Da Pont, the commissioner of the Canadian Coast Guard, so it's not a lost cause yet. We're still encouraging the federal government to work toward that to alleviate the cost you have.

But, Tommy, Isaac, or Jaypetee, if any of you wish to answer regarding the young people and the opportunities they're looking for... The last time, in my discussions with you, Tommy, you said that if we had infrastructure up there and small craft harbours or multi-facility harbours and access to fisheries resources by moving the OA line, the young people would have a bright future up there in accessing what would be considered traditional ways of life.

I wonder if you could elaborate on that.

• (0955)

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk: Thank you.

Seeing what's happening to our world today... Just recently we felt another impact on our livelihood from the sealing industry. The Europeans once again affected us with their marine fishing; that's happening more and more. It's fairly new to us up this way in Arctic Bay, but we've always known marine fishing is around us. We want to have more economic measures to make our livelihood up here, because it's been our livelihood for hundreds of years. All we have in our territory are marine mammals and land animals.

Now more and more fishing is coming in our direction. We feel the younger generation growing up now could have more to look forward to with the fishing industry if the OA boundary could be moved past Lancaster Sound and we were given the opportunity to fish in our area instead of being shut down, because our economy is affected by the European sealing industry. It seems like our livelihood up here is getting harder, that more is being taken away from us, and people are tending to look elsewhere for jobs.

Our livelihood depends on what surrounds our communities, marine mammals and all that. In that sense we are asking and needing help with the small craft harbours we were talking about so we could proceed with our livelihood and be who we are up here.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you.

Isaac or Jaypetee, do you have any comments?

Mr. Jaypetee Akeeagok: Yes. I would like to indicate to you once again that we are extremely excited to try to set up a deep-sea fishery, or even a test fishery here in our community, which we hope will start this spring.

But going back to small craft harbours, there were some studies done in the past. In this community we are not looking for something extravagant; we're not looking for \$10 million. We're looking for a facility that can provide protection for domestic boats from strong winds. I believe the largest boat in this town is 30 feet long. We need to maintain our hunting to put food on the table, and we have absolutely no shelter for our boats when the seas get rough. We cannot order any trailers because they cost too much, so a lot of the bigger boats are just dragged up on the shore when that happens.

We are asking for funding to be made available to put up shelters in order to maintain our livelihood and develop a fishing industry in the future. The sealskin industry, our renewable resource, has collapsed, so we are looking for different avenues to maintain the population here in our community.

Thank you.

• (1000)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much.

Mr. Calkins of the Conservative Party is next, for 10 minutes, please.

Mr. Blaine Calkins (Wetaskiwin, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I certainly want to thank all of our guests for coming today and for being online. It certainly is very interesting for an Albertan to hear some of the perspectives on what is happening across our great country.

I have a few questions, and then I'll probably share some of my time with Mr. Keddy.

As I look at where Resolute and Grise Fiord are, how much of an open-water season do you have? What kind of fishing season are we really looking at here for deep-sea fishing and the inshore fishery?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Go ahead.

Mr. Jaypetee Akeeagok: For this community, in terms of the summer season or boat season, we are looking at from July or early August to early October. That is our open season for boats, but our open seasons are sometimes longer. However, because the ice patterns are changing, sometimes the access to Jones Sound becomes blocked from multi-year ice that is being dragged down here from the Kane Basin in the North Pole area.

In terms of inshore fishery, we are proposing to do ice fishing, as they do in Cumberland Sound, in Pangnirtung. We would have a longer winter season because of our dark season up here. If that goes as planned, it would be from roughly the end of February to June.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk: This is Tommy from Arctic Bay. Can I please respond to that?

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Certainly.

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk: Thank you.

Our season usually starts around June, and then ice starts forming around the end of October. It seems as though the global warming is affecting us. It used to start freezing towards the end of August, and it would be frozen in September, but global warming is also affecting our community, and we're feeling every bit of it in our community.

To add on to why the small craft harbour is needed in our community, the time limit that we have and the amount of fishing the ships would have up here would be crucial—instead of travelling to Greenland, where they would unload and come back to our area. That would take a bit of time from fishing. If we had a small craft harbour in our community, that would make unloading quicker and they could go back to their fishing area. So in that sense, it is crucial to have a breakwater in our communities because of the time span that we have for the open water.

Thank you.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: Thank you very much.

That leads me to my ultimate question.

Obviously for the winter season the freezing capacity is built right in. In the ice-free season, if these wharves were built, you'd obviously have to have processing and freezing capabilities if you're not going to have them on the boats.

My understanding is that there are a couple of boats leased by the fishing organization up there, and they're freezing right on the boat. Is it a quick freeze on the boat? If that boat were able to make port some place on Canadian soil, there would have to be the facilities and infrastructure in place to off-load and keep that frozen. I'm wondering if anybody has looked at what that would cost over and above building some of these wharves and breakwaters. Now we're talking about not just building wharves. That's just the first part. The next part is all the other accompanying infrastructure, especially if we're going to move into any type of processing or pre-processing before it's shipped into the markets, which I believe you, Mr. Earle, indicated were in the Far East.

Has anybody looked at that? Is there any information on that?

•(1005)

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Mr. Earle, do you want to respond to that?

Mr. Harry Earle: It really hasn't been studied thoroughly, but the principle of having isolated fish plants serviced by fishery boats has existed in Newfoundland and Labrador probably since the turn of the previous century, for 100 years perhaps, along the south coast of Newfoundland, where fishery boats have come into the fish plants and picked up the product and bring it to Boston ports. So we

envisage the same type of structure, where you would have refrigerated boats pick up the fish and bring it down to St. Anthony and eventually, say, to Montreal, which is an international container port. At the same time, when you're heading north, you'll bring up supplies if you're empty.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: But many of your smaller—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): You have three minutes left.

Mr. Blaine Calkins: I'm sorry. Go ahead, Gerald.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Mr. Keddy.

Mr. Gerald Keddy (South Shore—St. Margaret's, CPC): You share time almost as well as I do.

I would like to thank our witnesses for appearing today both by conference call and here in the conference room. I have a couple of quick questions.

I'm just trying to figure out some of the logistics here. I've been at a number of committee hearings at which we've talked about small craft harbours taking some responsibility for the north. I'm trying to get a clear picture of this situation as it exists on the ground—or on the ocean, if you will—today. My understanding right now is that there are no small craft harbours inside of Nunavut. Pangnirtung is, I think, the only community with a proper harbour and a wharf at the present time.

Can you just quickly tell me if that's correct?

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We've been looking at which communities have the high and low tides. Some of these communities have water levels—

Mr. Gerald Keddy: I'm going to interrupt for a second. I don't think you understand my question.

As I understand it now, there's no small craft harbours presence in Nunavut.

Mr. Earle is nodding his head yes.

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Thank you. That's right.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: I'm assuming the five communities we're discussing today all have a reasonable tide. You started to talk about the tide and the current—a reasonable tide and not too many knots at sea.

What's the average tide in your community, Mr. Toomasie?

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: The tide in my community is a bare minimum compared to.... You have seen the current level. It's very minimal. It's something like four feet above.

Mr. Gerald Keddy: Okay. Your concern is not the tide or the current; it would be ice conditions.

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: In the last few years the ice has started to disappear at the beginning of July, and it freezes up again in the second week of November.

•(1010)

Mr. Gerald Keddy: I'm know I'm running out of time, but I have a question and a statement.

Certainly the federal government has responsibility for the north. We understand that, and we need to work in partnership with Nunavut. It seems to me that the request is reasonable enough. I realize that some department has to take responsibility for it. I don't know if that's small craft harbours branch or Indian Affairs and Northern Development, because it really is a northern development issue.

There's a greater issue that maybe we should discuss at another time. We've discussed around it several times. We have Canadian boats fishing in the high north—a number of them from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia—and they're landing fish. We're freezing them at sea, landing them, and shipping them out of Greenland when we could be landing and shipping them out of Nunavut. The communities themselves are a long way from being able to bring the infrastructure in where they can fish that quota themselves. But at the end of the day, that's what's needed. There is a great distance from where we're starting to where we want to end up.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): I don't know if anyone wants to respond. If they do, please move quickly, because we're running out of time. We have to go to the next round.

Mr. Earle looks like he wants to answer.

Mr. Harry Earle: Yes, Mr. Chair.

Very briefly, most communities have a breakwater. In other words, it's there to protect the boats from the bad weather. But there's no wharf. There's no wooden piling where you can actually tie the boats up. And that's where your problem is.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much.

We're going to go to our next round of questioning now. I'm going to ask colleagues and guests to try to keep their questions and answers to the point, please.

For the last round we're going to Mr. Byrne, for five minutes, please.

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'll follow up on my previous question, which basically relates to the true needs of the communities for harbour infrastructure and the realities the north is facing today as a result of climate change.

Several guests have pointed out that there are changing ice conditions. From an engineering point of view, the destruction of a wharf in these kinds of climates is based on loose ice. When you have shorefast ice—quick freeze, quick thaw—from a structural point of view, that's the best thing you can have. Frequent thaws and loose ice in the ocean that is drifting through currents and tides causes the most amount of damage to a wharf structure.

Could you comment on the true needs of your communities in terms of a multi-use wharf? Again, that's for inshore fishing, inshore hunting, offshore fishing through the use of factory freezer trawlers and other things, the supply of goods and services, and industrial services as well. Could you provide some comment about the effects of climate change and the precise impact on engineering to these

structures? Would you be able to give the committee some insight about these things?

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Thank you, Chairman.

I have been talking about the deepwater port while participating with you. Just to make it clear, in the old days climate change was still not realistic. Sometimes in the middle of the summer, loose pack ice just stayed in the harbour. So during the sealing season they could not barge the supplies, so the ship itself had to land right at the shore. There was no choice. That happened twice, two seasons in a row, way back in the old days in my community, even though there was no port. That's the same location we have been looking at. If the deepwater port happens to be built, we have the right spot. We have a good spot. We have the right location. The landscape is very good. It's the right location.

So for these kinds of trawlers, this is what would fit, if that answers your question.

•(1015)

Hon. Gerry Byrne: Maybe some other witnesses who are on the line as well could comment on what the true needs of your community are in terms of a multi-use wharf.

Basically, what I'm trying to explore is whether a small wharf that accommodates 30-foot vessels, which is really what Fisheries and Oceans' small craft harbours program would be primarily interested in supplying, is what your community needs. Or is something more significant, something with a broader use, required, such as a wharf that would be able to accommodate a 100-foot vessel or a 125-foot vessel or oil barges or small tankers that service the oil needs of the community, and so on? Is that what the community is looking for? Because that's very important for this committee to determine. It's very important for you so that we get this right the first time. If a wharf is built in a community at, say, a cost of \$3 million, but at the end of the day you still need another wharf to accommodate a larger vessel for off-loading fuel oil and to accommodate offshore vessels, then we have not met the full needs of the community.

What I think every member of this committee wants to do is get this right with you the first time.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Go ahead.

Mr. Jaypetee Akeegok: Thank you very much for your straight-to-the-point question.

One of my colleagues earlier mentioned that most of the communities have shelters for small boats. Unfortunately for this community of Grise Fiord, which is 90% harvesters and utilizes the short hunting season, we don't even have a shelter for our boats. As I indicated earlier, it's what this community's immediate needs and requests are. As we mentioned earlier, some studies have been done that were conducted by DFO. A portion of our shoreline was approved. And what we kept getting stuck on was the funding to provide that small shelter, which I believe could easily fall under the small watercraft wharf we're referring to.

Especially for this community, because of the longer boating season and the weirder weather we are having during summers, with stronger winds—on the weekend we had over 100 kilometre per hour winds, and that was the minimum, and that happens in the summer sometimes—it would help our sealers as well as our people who use boats.

We have nothing up here. So what this community would request for its funding is to at least start off with the approved location to make it sturdier for our inshore boating.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much.

We have to move now to Mr. Blais.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Reynald Blais: My question is for one of the individuals who is currently on line or who is here in Ottawa.

I'd like you to talk to us about climate change. Is it your impression, when you are in Resolute Bay, Arctic Bay or elsewhere, that these changes are having an impact on your region? If so, what are they?

Mr. Kilabuk.

● (1020)

[*English*]

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk: I don't know if Isaac answered, but if he hasn't answered I can answer. This is Tommy from Arctic Bay. Thank you.

Yes, we have really felt the climate change in our community. As I mentioned earlier, before this the sea ice would start freezing towards the end of August, and by the beginning of September it would freeze and it would stay frozen until towards the end of July. There were times in our community when the ice didn't even go; it broke up, but it never moved out.

For the past 20 years I've noticed that the ice conditions are getting thinner now, and it is getting more dangerous now for us to do our hunting in the fall and in the springtime. We have really felt the difference. The time that it's taking to freeze now and the way it's breaking up now in the springtime, it's so thin that we have really noticed. In the short 20 years that I've been living here in Arctic Bay, yes, we are feeling the impact of global warming in our community.

Thank you.

Mr. Reynald Blais: Monsieur Kalluk.

Mr. Isaac Kalluk: It's Isaac Kalluk from Resolute Bay. Yes, we noticed that too, a lot in a couple of years. The ice goes out in July, then it's ice free for two months; I mean no ice at all. Before this, we never used to go out boating from island to island, but for a couple of years now it's been completely ice free. We start travelling more on boats from island to island, and it's because of that warming.

I think the land is rising because the permafrost is melting more. In the shoreline, we start seeing what we never used to see, that it becomes little islands because the land is rising dramatically, more so than before.

The main thing is that in the summer it's completely ice free, and it never used to be like that.

That's about all I have. Thank you.

Mr. Reynald Blais: Monsieur Akeegok.

Mr. Jaypetee Akeegok: Yes, we have seen the climate change up here since the 1960s. What we are seeing more is that there's a lot more runoff from glaciers. The weather is more unpredictable. As well, more large multi-year ice is floating from the Kane Basin, from the North Pole, from the Arctic Ocean. It seems to be coming down more regularly rather than coming down in the fall, as it used to be.

For direct heat, if you're directly to the sun you can feel the heat more, but as soon as you go into a little bit of shade it doesn't make a huge difference. It's just that the direct sunlight has made the heat feel a lot warmer.

Also, there are a number of species, animals and birds, that we never used to see, that are coming up here.

So those are the different things we have seen here. Personally, I cannot indicate that it's global warming; it might be climate change.

Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much, Jaypetee.

We'll now have to go to Mr. Stoffer.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Thank you very much again, everybody.

Have you had an opportunity over the past year to address some of these concerns with the minister responsible for aboriginal affairs and northern development, Mr. Strahl? I would assume that the department may have a role to play in some of the development opportunities in the Far North.

Have any of your organizations had a chance to speak to him or his department on some of your issues?

● (1025)

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk: Can I respond to that? I'm Tommy from Arctic Bay.

Thank you, Peter. It's hard for me to really answer that, because we're elected to the hunters and trappers' organization for a term of two years each, which makes it hard to relate back to a few years that have gone by. So I wouldn't really be able to answer that question, because I was elected last year and wasn't there before.

So I'm sorry about that, Peter.

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: No, we haven't had any dealings with the minister of DIAND.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Okay. One suggestion I would make, knowing the minister, is that he may be amenable to a meeting in the future just to address some of these issues.

One of the other concerns, of course, is that the previous and current government have emphasized, at least publicly, their concerns about Arctic sovereignty in the Far North. There are debates with the United States and other countries about the Parry Channel or Lancaster Sound, the entrance to the Northwest Passage—and of course, you folks are already there. We've been talking about moving an army base, or at least a 100-man contingent, to Resolute, and everything else. But when I was visiting with you, Tommy, I think you had said that if you had opportunities with infrastructure or economic opportunities, more people would stay in your communities.

I'm just wondering, Isaac, or Tommy, how long you have lived in those communities. How much would it cost your three communities—Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, and Grise Fjord—working together as an Arctic fisheries alliance, to set up the infrastructure you're looking for in order to facilitate any fishing opportunities? I'd like just a ballpark figure. Have you done a study on that at all?

Harry?

Mr. Harry Earle: I don't think we have any studies on this.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Then perhaps I may phrase my question this way. When the federal government worked with the Nunavut government and picked the seven communities that got the small craft harbours, were all three of your communities involved in the discussion, and if not, why not?

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk: To my understanding, we were not informed of that by our government, so I would not really be able to answer that question, Peter. I'm sorry.

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Isaac or Jaypetee?

Mr. Jaypetee Akeagok: I will be honest in saying that when those papers were faxed to me—and I have been chairman of the IHTO for the last six years—it was the first time we had seen the communities being proposed for wharves. So in the short term, no, these proposals have never been mentioned to us or we have never been asked about them.

Mr. Isaac Kalluk: We've been to all sorts of government bodies to get this thing going and we've even been talking to our MLA for so many years now. He took pictures and looked at it and said it's okay, but we never got any feedback from them. I wish they were trying. That's all we ever heard from them, that they'd look into it. We are still waiting.

Thank you.

• (1030)

Mr. Peter Stoffer: Well, Isaac, I just want to thank you very much for that.

And would you say hello to Simeonie for me, and to Darlene Willy.

And Tommy, if you can say hello to Levi for me, I'd appreciate it.

Thanks.

Mr. Isaac Kalluk: I shall do that.

Mr. Tommy Kilabuk: I'll do that too.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Thank you very much, Mr. Stoffer. Maybe you should do a householder.

We'll now go to our final questioner.

Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Randy Kamp (Pitt Meadows—Maple Ridge—Mission, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

And thank you, gentlemen, for appearing. And for those who are on the line, I appreciate the perspective you bring to this.

I want to explore briefly the whole issue of harbour ownership.

I know, as Mr. Stoffer has alluded to, the concept at this point is that the government would be interested in developing initially those seven small craft harbour locations, or sees the need there. In the other 20 or so communities in Nunavut, I'm sure there's a need there as well, as those on the line have been sharing with us. So in the future there could be other small craft harbours in addition to these seven. At some point along the way the government will need to decide how those are owned and also managed.

The usual model in the south is that the Government of Canada has acquired the property, both the water lot and the upland as well, and constructed the harbour facilities, and then devolves the day-to-day management of it, usually to a harbour authority that conducts the minor maintenance. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans or the Government of Canada, as the owner of the property, still maintains responsibility for the major maintenance. That's a general model that's currently followed in the small craft harbours program.

I'm just wondering if you think that is still the best model for Nunavut. I think I've heard you say that there is a different set of needs. There is commercial fishing that you would like to develop, and that really is what the small craft harbours program is about. It's about supporting that in the south. In the north you perhaps have other issues—transportation and so on—and perhaps that model would give you less flexibility. I wonder if you've thought of other models.

I suppose the other model that the government would want to investigate is whether the Government of Nunavut should own this property. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans would assist in some way in the development of these small craft harbours, but they would continue to be owned by Nunavut rather than by the Government of Canada.

Mr. Earle and Mr. Toomasie, seeing that your location is one of those seven, I wonder if you've given any thought to this or if you could share with us on this.

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: Thank you, Chairman.

Randy, the deepwater port would be of most benefit in my community because the fishing is only about 100 miles away from our community, and our trawlers need to land there. As I mentioned, about 12,000 tonnes end up in Greenland. It should be landed on Canadian soil.

The real benefit to offshore fishing would be having a deepwater port, especially in my community. This should be the key community that would benefit in the whole of Nunavut to facilitate the need for an offshore fishing area to keep the dollars in Canada.

• (1035)

Mr. Randy Kamp: Who would own that, as you see it, and who would maintain it?

Mr. Lootie Toomasie: That has to be in place, and we need to plan for that.

I'll have Earle respond to that part of the question.

Mr. Harry Earle: I think it's certainly beyond the capability of the community to solve the problems with the fishing enterprise. It really would fall within the authority of other governments—Nunavut or the Government of Canada.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Bill Matthews): Gentlemen, that concludes our round of questioning. I think we've gone through it thoroughly.

Before I go any further, for those people on the line here I want to recognize the presence of your member of Parliament, Nancy Karetak-Lindell, who's joined us for the last piece of our meeting. Nancy is a seatmate of mine in the House. I want to recognize her, as well as Senator Adams, for being here. I want to let you know that those two people are here with us this morning.

Thank you very much, by the way, to the witnesses appearing in person and to our witnesses online, for your testimony. I think you've gleaned from the committee's questions that we're very sincere about our efforts in small craft harbours right across this country, but in particular in the north. I want to thank you sincerely for that.

I'm going to adjourn the meeting for a couple of minutes, because the committee has further business to deal with.

So thank you very much.

We'll adjourn for two minutes, and then resume.

[Proceedings continue in camera]

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