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**Chair**

**Mr. Rodney Weston**

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Tuesday, May 5, 2009

• (1115)

[English]

**The Chair (Mr. Rodney Weston (Saint John, CPC)):** I call this meeting to order.

I'd like to begin by thanking Mr. Comerford for coming here today on behalf of ACOA to meet with the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans to discuss the issues surrounding CCFI.

Mr. Comerford, we generally allow 10 minutes for presentations to the committee. You'll hear some beeping noises up here as we try to stick to fairly specific time constraints for questions and answers. With presentations we try to keep it as close as possible to the time line. If you hear a beeping when you're speaking, maybe you can move it forward and try to begin the wrap-up.

Before I turn the floor over to Mr. Comerford, I'd like to assure him that he has the full attention of the committee this morning.

Mr. Comerford, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Richard Comerford (Director General, Regional Operations, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having provided me this opportunity to meet with the committee and discuss the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation, or CCFI.

The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency was established in 1987 as the federal regional economic development agency for Atlantic Canada. Its headquarters are in Moncton, New Brunswick, and it has regional offices in the capital city of each of the four Atlantic provinces.

The agency's mandate is to advance the economy of the region across all sectors through advocacy, coordination of the economic development activities of federal departments, and the delivery of programs designed to effect specific outcomes. The agency's programs focus on business development, community development, and innovation.

The Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation is owned by Memorial University of Newfoundland and housed at the university's Marine Institute in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. The CCFI works with the fishing industry to assist the sector to access the research capacity of the various institutions throughout Atlantic Canada. CCFI does not carry out any research and development. There are at least 20 organizations and institutions with fisheries-related research capacity in Atlantic Canada, and I've attached a list of those.

ACOA was involved in the establishment of the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation 20 years ago. I was personally involved for the first 13 years of the CCFI's existence as the representative of the agency on the board of directors and the executive committee of the board. At that time, there was recognition that the fishing industry was not benefiting to the degree possible from access to the scientific and technical capabilities of institutions, particularly the Marine Institute and Memorial University. It was also felt that the institutional capacity was not being applied to the fishing industry.

In 1988 ACOA had just become operational, with a mandate to support economic development across Atlantic Canada. The fishing industry was facing particular challenges in the groundfish sector, and more innovation was needed. For the period from 1988 to 1999, the agency provided a total of \$15 million to fund two five-year mandates for the CCFI.

The economy of Atlantic Canada has evolved over time and ACOA's approaches have adapted to these changes. In the late 1990s the agency moved to a more business direct delivery model.

After the second five-year mandate, we challenged the CCFI to become more sustainable and to seek other sources of funding for their operations. Funding from federal-provincial agreements maintained the CCFI for a further three-year period.

In 2002, the agency launched the Atlantic Innovation Fund, or AIF, as a major initiative to stimulate growth through innovation in Atlantic Canada. The focus was to encourage, facilitate, and fund the commercialization of research in the business community and institutions. Priority was given to initiatives that had specific research plans with expected outcomes that integrated the institutional research capacity and business enterprises with products that were capable of commercialization.

CCFI received funding from the first round of AIF, but was advised once again that they needed to pursue a sustainable governance and funding model. Three subsequent proposals by CCFI to the Atlantic Innovation Fund were not successful.

Finally, in 2008 CCFI secured \$1.5 million in ACOA funding through the agency's Innovative Communities Fund, with the provision that CCFI provide a sustainability plan. The subsequent plan that was presented required that the agency provide \$1 million per year indefinitely in order for CCFI to operate.

ACOA openly acknowledges the contribution that CCFI has made, along with research bodies throughout the region, to the integration of research and innovation in the development of the region's fisheries sector. However, over the course of 20 years, the fishing industry has evolved, research institutions have become more directly engaged in outreach to the private sector, and ACOA's approaches and programs have evolved to reflect the changes in the economy.

• (1120)

The seafood industry in Atlantic Canada developed its own direct path to research and innovation funding, as witnessed by the approximately \$60 million provided to fishing and aquaculture organizations under ACOA's Atlantic Innovation Fund since 2002.

Companies and institutions from across Atlantic Canada have pursued AIF to access support for key R and D projects tied to downstream commercial opportunities for individual companies or for the sector generally. A few examples include the following: Quinlan Brothers Limited of St. Anthony, Newfoundland and Labrador, has accessed AIF to support research and development in the processing of chitin and chitosan, which are natural derivatives of shrimp and crab shell waste; Acadian Seaplants Limited of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, accessed AIF to pursue research into the development and commercialization of two new seaweed food products; AIF is supporting Aqua Bounty Canada Inc. of Souris, Prince Edward Island, in its research designed to generate technology to produce reproductively sterile Atlantic salmon; and the University of Prince Edward Island, Atlantic Veterinary College, is using AIF support to research the effects of lobster moulting to increase the quality and value of the landed products in Southwest Nova, Nova Scotia.

A key objective of the Atlantic Innovation Fund is to link the industrial capabilities around commercialization with the institutional capacity for research and development. But this objective is also a shared objective of players throughout the region. For example, currently there are industry outreach offices at 14 universities and colleges within Atlantic Canada, and I have attached a listing for your viewing. Most of these have been established since the inception of the Atlantic Innovation Fund. Each of these offices has a mandate to be engaged with, and to be relevant to, all sectors of the Atlantic economy, including the fishery.

There is a constant state of dialogue within the sector. For example, new technologies are enabling institutions to identify their research capability and promote it to relevant audiences. Memorial University recently announced a new web-based search engine for exactly this purpose. This interchange is constant and ongoing and it did not exist 20 years ago when the CCFI was established.

Over the last two decades, ACOA's programs have adjusted and responded to the transforming nature of the economy of Atlantic Canada. Our business programs now provide repayable loans rather than non-repayable contributions. Our community programs are designed to stimulate sustainable economic activities directly in affected communities. Our innovation programs require specific research outcomes that result in commercialization and projects that are self-sustaining.

The agency's position is that the original objective behind the establishment of the CCFI has been accomplished. The fishing industry and the institutions with related research capacity are working well with each other. The need for a stand-alone, non-sustainable organization, which requires \$2 million per year to facilitate research and development, is no longer a compelling or appropriate use of ACOA funds.

Thank you very much.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Comerford.

Mr. Byrne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thanks, Rick, for appearing before us.

You relay a story about ACOA being extremely successful in terms of stimulating innovation in Atlantic Canada—and yes, indeed you have. I think the organization has brought a tremendous amount of leadership, expertise, as well as dollars, badly needed money, to creating an innovative culture and capacity in the Atlantic region, which I think is a model for the rest of the country.

This is where we get into more of a philosophical debate about innovation and the innovation chain. I was reading an interesting editorial or column in *The Globe and Mail* on Saturday by the president and vice-chancellor of the University of Calgary. He made the point that in Canada we're extremely good at innovation, but not very good at the innovation chain or making these technical advances translate into commercial activity. The president of the University of Calgary said that establishing networks to be able to facilitate a completion of that chain was absolutely essential to the commercialization of Canadian innovation and prosperity in Canadian business. He referring specifically to those knowledge networks like CCFI that allow basic or pure science to be translated into applied science and into commercial innovation. He said that was lacking.

We heard from the executive director of the CCFI that there may be a concern on ACOA's part that the linkages in that innovation chain, when it comes to the fishing industry, are mature enough that CCFI is no longer needed.

Rick, would you be able to describe to us how the fishing industry has this critical issue so right, and how it can be used as a model for the rest of the country, because it's clearly lacking for the rest of the country?

I know we have a limited amount of time, but I have a second question. The CCFI has met or exceeded all provisions under third party delivery mechanisms, as outlined in both the Treasury Board and the Auditor General's remarks. Is there anything we should know that CCFI is not doing in this regard that causes concern for ACOA? If so, we're not aware of them. In fact, I understand that CCFI has been audited on numerous occasions, and it's been said that they've met all of those third party delivery requirements—and if not met, they've exceeded them.

On those two points, Rick, if you could enlighten our committee, that would be great.

By the way, thanks for coming on such short notice. I appreciate it.

• (1125)

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Thank you, Mr. Byrne.

I'll deal with the second question first, because I'm not sure of the exact point of the first question.

Our relationship with CCFI in terms of accountability and that sort of thing would be a client-partner relationship. We get regular reports, probably quarterly, updating us on the activities of CCFI, and then at the end of each year we get all of the financial statements prepared by Ernst & Young. I think that's their personal auditor right now.

We've found the financial aspects of CCFI's activities to be quite good; they're quite straight, and there's no reason for worrying or questioning there

Does that answer the question?

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** It does, and we're good and clean on that file.

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** One of the issues around third party delivery would also have to do with whether the organization conducting the third party delivery is actually undertaking things within their mandate. Is CCFI doing things that ACOA would do, if ACOA were actually doing them?

Some of the things CCFI does, or some of the projects they would be involved with or fund, are not things ACOA would normally do. Some examples of that might be development work in the fishery, or experimental fisheries, and that kind of thing. That would be more the mandate and in the purview of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, I guess.

But for the most part, the financing and the records, and all of that, of the CCFI, to the degree possible, seem to be fine.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Okay. Let me elaborate, then, on my first question. In fairness, it may not be in your purview, or it is more of a cross-governmental policy issue or debate.

You said that basically there's an established, well-oiled network within Atlantic Canada, specifically in the university system, to be able to transfer technology from the environment of academia into the private sector, which I don't disagree with. There are some very good institutions that have developed out there. The question is whether or not they're completely good enough.

I remarked that the president of the University of Calgary said that this is a Canadian issue: we're not very good at transferring technology from the academic environment to the private sector. That's where we fail, not on the intellectual side but on the intellectual transfer side, in getting that process out into commercial application.

ACOA does fund other organizations, like Springboard Atlantic. Are we to read from this that maybe this is going to stop, that because individual institutions have mechanisms in place to be able to outreach their expertise, their R and D capacity within the university...? I know that Dalhousie has an outreach office, Memorial has one, and Saint Mary's has one. Pretty well every university has

an outreach office. Because that is the case, should Springboard Atlantic expect to shut down soon?

If not, what exactly is it about CCFI and the fishing industry such that the fishing industry has this so right that they don't need a go-between to get innovation, research, and development out of the university and college environment and into the private sector? How have they achieved this? Could we use this as a model for the world?

My proposition is that we're still lacking in that regard and that an organization like CCFI is still valuable. I think Springboard Atlantic is still valuable, and other initiatives that ACOA might want to fund outside of existing networks and mechanisms are still valuable.

Maybe you could comment specifically on CCFI.

• (1130)

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Since ACOA began, or over the course of our activities, one of the approaches we have taken in working with industries, industry associations, or groups within industries has been to identify particular initiatives—and usually they would identify them—where, if the industry were able to cause that to happen, it would be a good thing for the industry and everybody would benefit.

ACOA's approach has always been to provide seed capital or upfront capital, to provide money to get organizations through the early stages of their start-up, so that the good work they intend to do or hope to do can be recognized by those who are benefiting from it. Over time, then, those who are directly benefiting from it—and also if government departments with a specific mandate were able to benefit from it—would take on more of the cost of undertaking the activity.

There has always been a requirement toward a sustainability model, or else it becomes something the government has to do forever, and if that's the case, then it probably should be a government-owned structure as opposed to a third party structure. But again, I think the point is that when ACOA gets involved in something, whether it's the tourism association or something in the fishery, generally you do it for a while, but you hand it over to the industry once the industry has seen the value in undertaking it.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Rick, the fishing industry is probably one of the industries with the least amount of excess capital for research and development activities, yet the CCFI has been able to lever \$1 of assistance with \$5 of outside funding, and now operates with basically a 50% ratio in terms of its own operating costs. That's the testimony we've heard, if I've paraphrased it correctly, but that seems like a pretty good movement towards sustainability over the long run.

I agree with you. I don't know if CCFI would ever be fully sustainable, especially in these markets at this time. Could you comment on that?

Finally, is the door closed on CCFI? Has ACOA made a decision at the ministerial level and it's now no longer an option to fund CCFI?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** I think there were three questions there.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Could be.

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Is the door closed? I guess my answer to that would be yes. Minister MacKay and Minister Ashfield have written CCFI and advised them that ACOA would not be funding the CCFI further.

The other questions, I guess, concerned leverage and sustainability. With respect to the sustainability, there are two categories of money the CCFI uses. One is operating costs, which are the salaries, rent, travel, etc. for staff. The other is program activity.

Until recently, ACOA's money provided for both categories of funding and was generally \$1.5 million in total, with \$.5 million for operating and \$1 million for research and development.

The question was...?

• (1135)

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Did they show a movement toward sustainability, the fact that they've been able to lever so much operational funding from outside government circles and, as well, reduce their operating expenditures from a 100% ask to a 50% ask?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** The leverage would refer to the \$1 million they have in research and development money. The leverage figures they quote would be that that \$1 million results in their participation in  $x$  millions of dollars in research and development projects.

Some of the debate around leverage is that most of the other money that goes into those projects is money that comes from government or from the private sector. The government program money would continue to be spent, so it's leveraging it but it's really working with it, so you could argue the government money is leveraging the CCFI money just as well. Leverage becomes a bit of a mug's game, I think, when you look at it that way.

There have been indications from provincial governments that they're prepared to pay something toward the cost of the ongoing operations of CCFI, and that's seen as a move in the right direction. I guess that's something we had been telling CCFI they should be doing for about eight years.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Comerford.

Monsieur Blais.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Raynald Blais (Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, BQ):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I see that you are being generous with regard to time allocation today. So, that means you will do so fairly, no doubt, and consequently, I will be able to speak for a little bit longer.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** Good day. First, I want to speak to the committee members. I will have to leave you shortly after noon. I am giving an interview on the seal hunt. You know that today is a sad day, almost a day of mourning, because the European Parliament has decided, by a landslide, to vote in favour of banning seal products. For my part, the fight will continue, a fight for truth and respect for our traditions, particularly in the Magdalen Islands.

Furthermore, I also intend to talk about the possibility of having an emergency debate on this matter this evening, and we will see.

However, I would like to stress that there is no doubt that we will have to look again at the issue of the seal hunt. I don't know how we will be able to do so. I hope that it will happen next Thursday.

Good day. I heard people from the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation. Today, I am listening to you. I have clearly understood the message from the centre for innovation, but I am having a little difficulty understand yours. You are going to help me over the next few minutes better understand you.

Please tell me if I am right or wrong. It seems that there is a certain philosophy that a research and development agency, in order to be able to exist for many years, must ultimately rely on private sector funding so that the government, at some point, can stop funding that agency. It shouldn't be like that. I think that the government or your agency can approve funding on an annual, two-year, three-year, or five-year basis, with progress reports, and so on. And if various facts mean that we are not satisfied with the work done, the funding can be stopped.

I have always understood that research and development remains the poor parent of the private sector, if I might say so. The private sector will invest if it benefits it to do so, if it wants to make more money. I am thinking, in particular, of pharmaceutical products. Hundreds of millions of dollars are invested in research and development, but for a target market.

In the fishing industry, we are trying to understand what is happening underneath the surface of the water, that which we cannot see. In my opinion, we are just starting to do a bit of research and development in that sector. We should remember that, even with regard to cod, an area we are extremely familiar with, we still don't know today the chain of events that can scientifically explain what has happened with regard to cod stocks. This kind of research and development is extremely difficult and takes an extremely long time, in my opinion.

I'd like to give you the opportunity to tell me your philosophy, how you see things regarding research and development organizations coming to see you and whom, at some point, you are turning away; they are turned away because they haven't made the necessary efforts to get private funding, and you are cutting their funding.

I get the impression that there are all kinds of ways in which you could maintain the same control over the funding that you grant to such agencies. However, it's essential to understand that the work they do, in the area of research and development, is long-term, whether we want it to be or not. With regard to fisheries, I get the impression that this could mean that a centre, such as the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation, would not and will not be able to go and get private sector funding to make up for the shortfall.

• (1140)

[English]

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** There are a couple of issues here. One is that the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency puts a tremendous amount of money into research and development. About eight years ago we developed a new program, the Atlantic Innovation Fund, which made an unprecedented amount of R and D money available. To do that, we had to take a particular approach. We had to target commercializable projects. We wanted products that could be developed and sold, products that would allow people to be employed in manufacturing.

This was the approach we took with respect to research and development. In the course of doing this, our ability to continue to do everything we'd always done before was limited. We adopted the Atlantic Innovation Fund model and things like CCFI. We were carrying on the work of matching the fisheries research with the fisheries industry. It was getting done. They had found each other.

There were also programs available, either through provincial governments or from other federal departments, that had a mandate for fisheries development. The one thing missing with CCFI was that specific matchmaking exercise—bringing those who want to do projects to those having the capability to do them. But after 20 years of this sort of interchange, we feel that this should be able to happen much better now that everybody knows one another and we have been working together for quite a long while.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** Do you feel that this is related to trust? From what I can hear, decode and interpret, there seems to be a lack of trust between your organization and the Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation. Tell me if I am right or wrong.

[English]

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** No, I would not see any breach of trust.

• (1145)

[Translation]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** If there isn't, why stop the funding?

[English]

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** The way our programs work is that they're for specific periods of time. There has to be a start, a time for conducting work, and an end. In the case of the CCFI, we've gone through that a number of times. We have now reached the point with the CCFI where we believe that the work they do can now be done without a specific organization that does what they do. There are a number of university institutions that provide the research. There are a number of university centres that make the research available to the public. It may be that the fishing industry will have to do as other sectors have done and try to find it for themselves, without the benefit of the CCFI. But we still believe that it will happen.

[Translation]

**Mr. Raynald Blais:** In closing, I want to thank you for your honesty. However, that is the problem. You are saying that there is a beginning and an end. In my opinion, research and development has a beginning, a period of continuity, a follow-up, but it doesn't have an end. We will always continue to do research. We will always need to innovate if we want to overcome challenges.

I appreciate your honesty, but I cannot agree with your perception of the situation.

Thank you.

[English]

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Mr. Stoffer.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer (Sackville—Eastern Shore, NDP):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Sir, thank you very much for coming today. Sir, how many people work for ACOA?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Throughout Atlantic Canada?

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** The whole kit and caboodle, sir, from the minister on down.

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** About 700.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** How many would have an extensive fisheries background?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** I would have to guess or speculate. I don't know. A number of us have had some experience in and around the fishing industry. If I had to make a guess, it would be 10 to 20.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Your testimony is based on the fact that your agency believes this work can be done elsewhere or it doesn't need to be done at all. So I'm asking about what premise or experience ACOA has to make that particular judgment. I'll argue the same, that a few years ago somebody at the Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation, which is an offshoot of ACOA, searched out a private golf developer in Cape Breton and gave them a million dollars. Now, I don't know why ACOA would be looking for private golf developers to give them a million dollars, but I question the agency's role in what they pick and choose.

This is the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency. You have four premiers. You have Minister Shea, who is from the province of Prince Edward Island. We heard expert testimony from industry and individuals representing thousands of fishing harvesters that the CCFI is something that should be clearly supported by government. You have the Department of Fisheries onside. You have four premiers, plus everybody else. The funding went from \$2 million down to \$1 million.

What is the real reason that this agency would be cut off from its funding? And Mr. Bonnell indicated to us that they were never directly told the funding would be terminated. Is that true?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** There's a fairly complex answer to the issue around who informs what or whom.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Okay, let me make it easier for you.

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** I certainly told the chairman and Mr. Bonnell, on two occasions, that we were unable to continue the funding.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** CCFI was supported by ACOA for several years. Is that correct?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Yes.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Obviously ACOA made, for whatever reasons, its decision to cut that funding. Were they given, in writing, a termination notice that said that on this particular day this funding would be terminated, stopped? Were they ever given that?

• (1150)

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Yes and no. In our letters of offer when we make a contract with somebody, we will say, "Here is a certain amount of money, which you can spend on certain things over a period of time." When the period of time is over, the contract is over. So it just stops. It would be unusual and unnecessary to really say that then and forever more we're not going to provide funding. It would almost be redundant. If we were going to provide more funding, we'd put out another letter of offer and go again.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Sir, a couple of years ago a report was done by the four lending agencies—the Western Diversification Fund, FedNor, the Quebec fund, and ACOA. It showed that ACOA had a worse return on their money than the other three. In terms of money that went out and money that came back in, ACOA had the worst returns. Yet here we have an organization that is widely supported. It states very clearly that for one dollar given, they could get up to five dollars back on leverage.

I'm just looking at this objectively. This seems to be a success story, something that ACOA should be very proud about. There is just something here that either you're not able to say or you may not comprehend. I simply don't understand why a successful agency of this nature, ACOA, which is supported through the academic level, the political level, and the industry level, wouldn't want to grab that and run with it.

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** I guess we grabbed it and ran with it for quite a while.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** Yes, you did.

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** A couple of things have happened. The CCFI was established to link the fishing industry with the academic community, and over the years, that has happened. There has been quite a high degree of uptake between the industry and the academic community. They've done a number of projects. So that's all working together. It's all well networked. At the same time, ACOA is probably more committed to innovation now than it was 20 years ago. From a budget perspective, we're putting more money into innovation. But we made the conscious policy decision to do innovation in a way that is representative of the Atlantic Innovation Fund, which is the commercialization of projects. We do this through a competitive process. We put out a call for proposals, and we get proposals from all sectors. We evaluate them, make judgments, and provide the money accordingly.

But we can't do everything. So that's the direction we've taken.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** I agree with you. There's no way ACOA can fund everything. But funding golf courses, especially a private one, is something I find objectionable. Yet ACOA can't fund the CCFI, which by all accounts is a great success story. They have done many things that you've asked them to do. They've sought other funding from the Atlantic provinces. They have funding from academia and industry, as well as \$300,000 from DFO. I ask, respectfully, that you

to go back to your superiors and ask them to rethink this decision before you actually close the door on it.

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Stoffer:** You're a quality fellow—St. John's spawn.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kamp.

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

Thanks for coming to help us to deal with this issue.

I'll start by asking you about the relationship between CCFI and DFO. What role did they play over these 20 years?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** CCFI would have a relationship with DFO that does not involve financing. For the most part, the financing for CCFI came from ACOA. CCFI would have worked with DFO on specific projects. It may be that there is expertise at DFO that could be brought to bear on a project, as good as the expertise identified by CCFI. So there would be a degree of mutual collaboration. Some of the projects CCFI would have been involved in might have had sources of funding from DFO programs. They had a general working relationship. Newfoundland is a fairly small place. People who are involved in a particular area of interest would all know one another and collaborate with one another. So the relationship with DFO would be quite cordial and for the most part financially separated. They both might contribute to projects, but that would be the extent of it.

• (1155)

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** You are talking about specific projects, as I understand it. Where I'm still a little unclear is on the whole process of giving notice of ACOA's involvement with CCFI.

In your report and in other testimony, we hear about the sustainability plan. Somebody asked CCFI, I guess, for a sustainability plan. I'm not quite sure what that is. Were you expecting to get something back from CCFI that stated their intention to go forward without funding from the federal government, or at least from ACOA? Is that what you expected by asking for a sustainability plan? Was this a way of giving notice that ACOA was no longer going to fund them?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** The requirement for a sustainability plan was placed in the last letter of offer or the last contract we had with them. Prior to this, about three years prior.... Again, this issue of becoming sustainable, and ACOA's ability to carry on and do this forever, has been an issue for about eight or ten years.

Based on discussions we had with them back about five years ago, they hired a consultant to do, I guess, a report on the options or the alternatives to their organization's structure. After looking at all the options, they came back and said that they liked what they had. They liked the status quo.



When they came back with that, we told them then that this was just not practical. It was not a way of continuing to carry on business, but it seemed to be that they'd looked at some other options and inevitably came back to ACOA for pretty much the full measure of their funding requirements. The term "sustainability plan", to me, would almost by definition imply that if somebody tells you to become sustainable, you're not expecting them to come back and say, "Give me some money, and I'll be sustainable." That is the way we looked upon it.

We had certainly communicated that to the Marine Institute or the university. We had communicated it to the board members, or the chairman of the board, and to Mr. Bonnell on a number of occasions.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** At that time, you expected to get back from them a sustainability plan, either then or even now or in the very near future. You saw a plan from them that made it clear that the operating costs were going to be from a different source of revenue, perhaps from the provincial governments or maybe from some other independent source, for example. But they would still want, say, \$1 million a year for projects, as they've had up to now.

Would ACOA find that kind of model an acceptable one or one that they would consider participating in?

• (1200)

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** I guess, from ACOA's perspective, we shifted our focus in terms of how we deal with innovation six or seven years ago, when we established the Atlantic Innovation Fund.

The Atlantic Innovation Fund has had tremendous take-up. It has been oversubscribed. We have a lot of very worthy projects that are not competitively getting funded, because there are better projects. So one of the considerations we had to think about was whether we could get more resources for things like the Atlantic Innovation Fund.

From our perspective, the money we have that we can dedicate to innovation would be directed towards the Atlantic Innovation Fund and that particular method of delivery. It is a matter of choices, to a degree, and we feel that the role played by the CCFI, 20 years later, two decades later, has been accomplished. The industry and the institutions know each other. The importance of innovation in the milieu of fisheries development and that sort of thing has been acknowledged. Our approach has been to concentrate more on AIF, by default. Things like CCFI should be funded elsewhere.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Weston might have a question.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston (West Vancouver—Sunshine Coast—Sea to Sky Country, CPC):** Thank you again for coming.

Let me first reiterate what my colleague Mr. Byrne said earlier. In times of economic uncertainty, innovation's going to be the key that allows us Canadians to compete in every sector—fisheries and otherwise—and I think everyone in the room agrees with that.

I have three parts leading to a question. The first thing, Mr. Comerford, is that it has been said widely in the discussion that the notice was at least ambiguous, that it was left open to interpretation whether funding was going to be cut off and whether there was ever

an opportunity to continue. If the institute came up with some alternative funding, perhaps there was at least a door open. That's the impression that was certainly left with CCFI's chairman, according to his testimony.

The second part of this question I'm leading to is, what flexibility is there in ACOA's programs to change somewhat the terms that might allow the door to be open?

The third part of the question is this. Is there a possibility of a new deadline with new terms that would say to CCFI, if you can come to us within a certain period presenting conditions that would be acceptable to ACOA, that would promote innovation, and that would help us compete better internationally, then here's your last chance? Is that even a possibility?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** With respect to the ambiguity around what notice we gave them, I suppose if somebody wanted to cast it that way, they could, but from our perspective—and I can speak first-hand to much of this—there was very little ambiguity in the discussions we had with the representatives of the university. The reason we would deal with the university in a matter like that as opposed to dealing with the board of directors of the CCFI is that it is the university that would be left holding the bag, shall we say, if the funding to the CCFI didn't come from ACOA. Then the university would have to somehow deal with that, because there'd be ongoing expenses and that sort of thing. So that's why we would have discussed it with the university.

Clearly, the identification of the last package of money, the \$1.5 million, came after a great deal of working with the institutions to try to find a way around all of this. So it wasn't like one day somebody got a letter and that was it. This was over a period of time and with a lot of interchange back and forth.

As far as ambiguity goes, in my view, there's very little ambiguity. There may have been some disbelief or non-acceptance, but I don't think there was ambiguity.

• (1205)

**Mr. John Weston:** Let's just say that there was no written letter that said, as of a certain date, funding will cease. Perhaps letters like that will go out in future from ACOA, but there wasn't one here. So at least some people might say there was ambiguity, whether you agree or not.

Let's move on to the other two parts, because I think we could get stuck on the notice indefinitely.

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Regarding the flexibility in our programming, there are a couple of things here. We have to deal with the programs that we have and budgets that we guess at. When we look at a program, like any department, it comes with terms and conditions as set out by Treasury Board. They turn into rules and guidelines, and we basically try to tie what the funding was intended for to how the funding gets spent.

It's probably too detailed for me to get into each our programs, but we clearly evaluated the potential for funding for CCFI against our three main tranches of programs and found that it was not a good fit. In the case of the Atlantic Innovation Fund, other projects that were closer to the criteria were beating CCFI, and when they were measured up against each other, it didn't measure up. In the case of our other programs, for example with our community programs, the money has to be spent in the community that's being affected. We just introduced a new Community Adjustment Fund, but that money has to be spent in the communities being affected.

For the most part, the money spent by the CCFI is spent within the institutions that are in communities like Halifax or St John's.

I'm just scrolling through our programs now in terms of what the issues would be with CCFI and those.

Then there are the other programs, the ones that we use to support businesses, to help them to expand and modernize and that sort of thing. Right now the demand that has been placed on those programs as a result of the general shrinking in credit and that kind of thing has really limited our ability to take money for that purpose and divert it to this purpose.

In terms of whether we have the flexibility, we might have it in the rules, but we don't have the budget or we have other priorities or something like that.

**Mr. John Weston:** It's good to hear that it was a rigorous assessment and you've come to the conclusion based on well-reasoned analysis. I think that's what the committee needed to hear.

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you, gentlemen.

I've been asked if we could provide for one more round of one minute each. Is everybody okay with that, to see if we can keep it to one minute? We've allotted one hour, and we have a little over five minutes remaining in the hour for Mr. Comerford.

Mr. MacAulay, one minute.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay (Cardigan, Lib.):** Thank you very much, Rick. It's good to have you here.

First of all, I understand quite well that you're implementing the decisions of government. You have to implement what's put before you, and I fully understand that.

Given the understanding that practically everybody involved in the fishing industry, letters from government members from all sides of the House, and the industry itself support this funding, is there anything illegal about this funding being extended for a year? Somebody gave CCFI the direction to go out and get funding from the provincial government, which they did, and the funding was cut from 100% to 50% over time. All I want to know is whether there is anything illegal or inappropriate about extending the funding. It's a government decision to extend or not extend the funding. This is very important to the fishing industry.

• (1210)

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** I'm not sure whether the term "illegal" is the best one to use. I guess what it boils down to is whether, given

the choices for limited funding, this is one that you would want to make the choice to provide the funding to.

It's not as much a legal issue, in my view, as it is.... After reviewing the program criteria that we have right now, I don't see a way we could do it with the programming that we currently have.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

Monsieur Lévesque, did you have a question you would like to ask?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque (Abitibi—Baie-James—Nunavik—Eeyou, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

First, Mr. Comerford, I want to verify something. If I understand correctly, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency receives all funding for economic development, research and innovation for the Atlantic region.

Are you then the only organization with the power of life and death over the other small organizations operating under your umbrella in research and innovation? Similarly, please explain why, too, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans has confidence in the CCFI, as do the various Atlantic provinces, but ACOA does not.

[*English*]

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** As far as ACOA providing funding for innovation in Atlantic Canada is concerned, we do. We have programs providing that funding. We do it for very specific projects that have specific outcomes and partners and legal agreements, and those sorts of things. As for whether we control all of it, I don't think so. The provincial and federal departments with a mandate specifically for fisheries development would also be involved in this.

I'm not sure I understand your reference to DFO trusting CCFI and our not trusting them. I don't think anybody has ever suggested that we don't trust CCFI. I think our position is that the role we wanted CCFI to play was making the industry familiar with the institutional capacity and allowing it to become familiar with that institutional capacity. That was our objective in getting involved with CCFI. Obviously, as years go by and people become more familiar with things and do things in different ways, that has been accomplished.

I think the message here from ACOA—and it may still be the case that other government departments would have an interest in the ongoing work they do—is that our main motivation was to act as a catalyst and to use our funding to get them together. Then, once they saw how good it was, they would carry on by themselves. That was the thinking behind this.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Comerford.

Mr. Allen.

**Mr. Mike Allen (Tobique—Mactaquac, CPC):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I have a really quick question. If I understand correctly, the last major funding round came out of the Innovative Communities Fund. Is that correct? Wasn't that A-base funding, if you will? It was under the Innovative Communities Fund, which typically doesn't go long term, but just supports community projects.

If that's true, and since we've had a lot of press and a lot of things said on this specific issue—and I know the province received money before out of the community development trust—has there been any approach by the provinces to ACOA to develop some kind of partnership going forward to keep this thing going? Have the provinces expressed their interest in that?

• (1215)

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** We've talked to the provinces—in my case, the Province of Newfoundland primarily—and our other offices have talked to the other provinces. There certainly has not been any approach by the provinces to ACOA to do something jointly.

My understanding is that based on the assumption that the federal government was going to put in \$1.3 million per year for five years, the provincial governments undertook to make a commitment of about \$300,000 or \$400,000 in total, for the same period. The provincial government did express some interest in getting more involved, but they didn't really approach us to do it on a joint basis, or something like that.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** They haven't done that since they found out that ACOA was not going to support it.

Have they come back to you since?

**Mr. Richard Comerford:** Well, they've left it out there. I guess we could react to that if we wanted to. Again, I'll go back to our point that given the way the university community and the fishing industry have found themselves, or found each other, the need to do this at that cost is, from our perspective, not something we feel we need to support. If others with a mandate closer to fisheries development did, then that would be their choice.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Comerford.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, I'd like to thank you for coming today to speak to the committee on this issue. We really appreciate your time and your forthrightness. Thank you very much, Mr. Comerford.

The committee will now take a brief break and we'll proceed into an in camera session.

*[Proceedings continue in camera]*

• \_\_\_\_\_ (Pause) \_\_\_\_\_  
•

*[Public proceedings resume]*

• (1235)

**The Chair:** Order, please.

Mr. Byrne, did you want to move your motion at this time?

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Yes, Mr. Chair.

I wish to move that, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans report the following to the House: that the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans fully endorses the harp seal hunt, that it approves of current regulated killing methods, approves that the harvesting of harp seals of the age cohort known as “beaters” and older is fully acceptable and that the Canadian harp seal hunt is humane, responsible and sustainable and

should continue for generations to come; that information of the committee's position, along with the results of the recorded vote, be made immediately available to the public through media advisories prepared by the clerk and distributed throughout Canada.

**The Chair:** You heard the motion as read by Mr. Byrne.

Is there any discussion?

Go ahead, Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Mr. Chair, I think I understand the motivation behind this, and all of us as committee members are supportive of the seal hunt.

In light of the very recent action of the European Parliament in their motion to ban importation, I wonder whether we should include comment on that in this motion. I would be prepared to amend this motion by replacing the rest of the paragraph after “the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans fully endorses the harp seal hunt” with this: that the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans fully endorses the harp seal hunt and strongly condemns the ban of Canadian seal products by the European Union despite overwhelming evidence in support of its sustainability, humaneness, and value to thousands of coastal Canadian families.

That would be my amendment.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kamp is moving an amendment to Mr. Byrne's motion. The clerk will obtain a copy of his amendment.

Go ahead, Mr. Byrne, on the amendment.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Mr. Chair, I seek clarification.

Does Mr. Kamp want to replace basically the entire content of my motion with his new wording, or does he want to add this amendment to the body of the text of my motion?

I seek clarification as to whether that is the case. I don't think it needs to be an “either/or”; it can be an “and”. If Mr. Kamp's amendment is to add content to the motion without deleting content, I wouldn't have a problem. I do have a problem with deleting content. I also question if it is in order to amend a motion in a way that would negate or delete the actual intent or context of the motion.

**The Chair:** Go ahead, Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** In my view, the amendment is completely germane. It doesn't change or negate the intent of the motion. It simply restates it in other words and adds another element, the ban of the European Union.

To clarify, yes, the amendment was to replace in the first paragraph all of the words after harp seal hunt”. I felt it was a little more elegant in terms of its references to sustainability, humaneness, and so on. It doesn't use the word “beaters”; I think Mr. Allen might be right in suggesting that “beaters” has some interesting connotations for some people. I tried to keep the same elements in there in terms of being humane, responsible, sustainable, and so on; I just reworded it and added that other element at the same time. That was the intent.

• (1240)

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Kamp.

Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston:** I want to say that it's the first time I've heard the words of Mr. Kamp's amendment. But as I heard them, it struck me that if I thought of a 25-year-old university student at Whistler, or a 50-year-old single mom in West Vancouver, or other people I represent, they would readily agree with what I just heard, but they would probably take issue with several parts of what Gerry has proposed, mainly because they're not educated about it. They might disagree with "should continue for generations to come", because we don't know what "generations to come" may bring us. They might agree it's humane, but think it could be more humane. They might say it's acceptable, but not fully acceptable.

In other words, there are many parts of Mr. Byrne's proposal, which we all agree with, that are more controversial than necessary. It seems to me that if we can reduce the controversial part and get something across that addresses the real problem—the real problem is that people want to stop Canadian products from crossing borders—and if we highlight that, we're more likely to generate a large degree of support for what we're doing in the House.

I think it's more than about getting a vote passed in the House, and Gerry, you're going to do that with this. I think it's about unifying Canadians as well. So I would support the proposed amendment.

**The Chair:** Mr. Byrne.

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

I think Canadians, whether they live in the Gaspé, the Magdalen Islands, the north shore of P.E.I., or the northeast coast of Newfoundland on the northern peninsula, are looking for leadership from their parliamentarians and assurance that they understand the issue.

The term "beater" is used in the Fisheries Act. It's an actual term in the definitions in the Fisheries Act describing an age cohort. It's used by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans in our licence regulations.

No, I don't think soft-selling this issue is really what our sealers and our sealing communities want to hear. They want to hear that their parliamentarians understand the industry, understand the issue, are prepared to confront it head-on with fact, are not afraid to use language that's actually used and incorporated into the government's own documentation, the regulations, and the general description of the industry. They're looking to see whether we're prepared to endorse the rhetoric and the sloppy language of the animal activists or whether we're going to stand firm and tall with our sealers and our sealing communities to say this is wrong. These negative campaigns based on misinformation are all about misinformation. If the government itself uses the term "beater", if fisheries officers use the term "beater", what's next? Are we going to amend my motion by saying we want to hug baby seals, because baby seals are really what we are trying to protect? Why don't we incorporate "baby seals" into the motion? Exactly. Come on.

This is exactly how the hunt is prosecuted. It's done in a very humane, sustainable, and ethical way. It describes the industry, and having parliamentarians not shy away from that language, having parliamentarians not shy away from that fact, does more good for this industry. And that's exactly what our sealers want to hear: that

we are not held captive to the false and misleading language of those who promote that Canada should stop killing baby seals.

I'm not going to put "baby seals" into my motion. I'm not going to take out the other language that is completely appropriate as well, because that's exactly how this industry is conducted. Having 12 parliamentarians stand up and say for the record that this is exactly what we stand for and that what has occurred in the past, what is occurring today, and what will occur in the future is solid, is humane, is ethical, is responsible, is sustainable, that's the way we need to go. If the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans won't even adopt that, well, if the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans and its members slink away from that, put in an amendment that we cuddle baby seals, while you're at it.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1245)

**The Chair:** Mr. Byrne, you had a question in your previous intervention around the amendment being actually appropriate, as you thought it negated the intent of the motion. I have conversed with the clerk, and she advises me that the amendment is appropriate.

Mr. MacAulay.

**Hon. Lawrence MacAulay:** It's unfortunate, then. I understood first, incorrectly, that Mr. Kamp intended to add it. I think it's most important that this committee endorse the seal hunt and indicate that it's fully acceptable and that it's humane. I think this motion was going to do a number of things, but unfortunately what we're into now is just going to cause difficulty.

If we do what Mr. Kamp has indicated he wants us to do here, I think we've destroyed the intent of the motion. Most people I represent, or all of them practically, oppose the seal hunt ban, understand the language of this motion and, I would think, want it fully supported by this committee. This day, seal hunters and the seal industry need our support, and what's in this motion fully does that. It does something for the committee too.

I think it's most unfortunate for the government to try to change the intent of this motion, and I disagree.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. MacAulay.

Monsieur Ouellet.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Christian Ouellet (Brome—Missisquoi, BQ):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I think that this is an extremely important motion and that it needs to be passed today. It is truly very important for us to support sealers. The motion shouldn't be defeated because of a word, particularly since the word is quite acceptable in French. The problem only exists in the English version, not in the French.

I suggest that in the English, we put the French word in quotation marks. Consequently, we would not be using the word “beater”, only the French word, especially as most sealers are francophone. This would thereby respect Mr. Byrne and Mr. Kamp's ideas. Everybody would be happy.

I repeat, Mr. Chair, that it is important in my opinion for us to adopt this motion today with or without that word, since it must be adopted. It's important to our sealers. Without a seal hunt, there would be so many seals that we wouldn't know what to do with them anymore. It's essential, at a time when the meat could be used, which is wonderful and which is currently being lost.

This motion needs to pass. If Mr. Temp and Mr. Byrne agree, we could put the French word in the English text. The French word is quite acceptable, “brasseur” is not beater.

[English]

**The Chair:** Monsieur Levesque.

[Translation]

**Mr. Yvon Lévesque:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is not a new situation. For many years, various Europeans have been making representations that, more often than not, are misleading. We have asked for expert opinions to ensure that the seals were being killed in a humane way and were not suffering too much. Obviously, when anything is killed...

Aside from a minor change in the hunt itself, all the arguments brought before the European Union referred to that situation and to these objections, and it was presented in that way. “Softening” a representation often signifies our backing down, a sense of guilt. I am putting the quotation marks because I am not sure that this is really a softer stance. However, we should not feel guilty about what has been done to us. We should not have to justify ourselves before our own citizens, who agree with us.

The motion being presented seeks to make known internationally that we intend to maintain our position and defend it. Furthermore, mention has been made of the fact that we want to file an appeal before the WTO and we are not alone: others want to intervene with us. To that end, we must maintain the attitude we have always had and continue to say that we are right in what we are doing and that it is acceptable. It is by demonstrating that we are sure that we are right that we will maintain our strength in international circles.

I am not directly opposed to Randy's motion, I think it is fine. I was already aware of the motion and I will continue to support it as it was originally introduced.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

●(1250)

[English]

**The Chair:** Mr. Weston is next, on a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. John Weston:** I am not sure what Mr. Lévesque just said. Is he supporting Mr. Kamp's amendment?

[English]

**The Chair:** That's not a point of order, Mr. Weston.

**Mr. John Weston:** Okay. I do have a point of order. If we pass this amendment, how does it get into the House? What do we with this?

**The Chair:** This motion will be reported to the House, whether in its amended form or its original form.

**Mr. John Weston:** Immediately.

**The Chair:** That will happen as soon as it's prepared.

Mr. Andrews.

**Mr. Scott Andrews (Avalon, Lib.):** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I have to say that I'm pretty disappointed with where I see this particular issue going.

With all due respect, Mr. Kamp, the words you've put around this are fine, and I think all of us agree with the words you have put there, because it is very important that we convey this message.

However, I don't understand, Mr. Chair, how you could allow a motion like this to substantially change what's before the committee. You've killed four lines of this motion explaining the seal hunt and its approved killing method, so I don't know why you won't take a little friendly amendment here to move your words, which you've said, down to the bottom, and furthermore, to add the words that you've added, because the words you had there are very important as well.

But to take away a motion that was put forward by my colleague here is ridiculous. It's ridiculous that you would do that for partisan reasons.

You look, you look, and you look at the word “harvest” and you look at the word “hunt”. These are all terms that we use in the seal industry. Depending on where you go, they like you to use the word “hunt” versus “harvest”. It's the way things happen on the ice.

There's the word “beater” as well. The seals are referred to this way because of the coat. There's actually that name for it: the raggedy-jacket. It's a white fur when they're losing it, and once they lose this jacket, that's the term they use. It's used for younger seals. It's the way we've been describing seals all along, and we shouldn't be afraid to tell it like it is. I don't understand why we want to soft-sell this.

Listen, we have to be honest and upfront with people. For too long now, we've been soft-selling this, and it has not gotten us anywhere in the world. Let's be honest and upfront with each other.

I like your words, I think they're great, but I think they can be added after the last semi-colon there. Furthermore, the committee agrees that we need to do this. I don't understand why you're trying to bring a soft sell to this.

●(1255)

**The Chair:** Mr. Calkins.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I think Mr. Kamp and I are going to make the same point. In the interests of time, I'll just give my time to Mr. Kamp, if that's okay with you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Actually, Mr. Kamp is further down the list here.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** I just wanted to make this point. I see my Liberal colleagues trying to spin this as some type of partisan thing. It's simply not. On the wording, we're going to come to some kind of agreement. To look for disagreement where there's agreement is actually the partisan action.

The wording as it stands now would say that “the Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans fully endorses the harp seal hunt”, which is a statement that hasn't changed, “and the committee strongly condemns the ban of Canadian seal products by the European Union despite overwhelming evidence in support of its sustainability”, which is a word that was previously used, “humaneness”, which is a word that was previously in the motion, “and value to thousands of coastal Canadians”, which is a new element that wasn't added in the previous motion.

I think maybe we're trying to look for disagreement where we actually have agreement. If you want to go back to the previous language, as far as I'm concerned I don't have a problem with it. If we simply want, as gentlemen around this table, to decide that we're going to have a working solution whereby we can keep the contents, satisfy the members on the other side of the table, and add in the element concerning the European Union's vote, I think that if we approach this from a more cordial perspective, we'll probably get the result we're looking for.

**The Chair:** Thank you, Mr. Calkins.

Mr. Allen.

**Mr. Mike Allen:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am just going to echo one of the things that Blaine said. I'm okay if we take that as an addition as opposed to a complete change. I'm not averse to taking a very hard position on this either—not at all.

My only concern was my comment that I did make—and I'm not concerned about using the term at all—which is that we are losing this in the court of public opinion in Europe, and it's perception, not reality. It's perception, and that was my only reason for saying that maybe if we toned out that one word we would have a different perception. But I'm not interested in soft-peddalling it if nobody else in the committee is. I have no problem going in full bore. It's not a problem at all. I just put that back on the record.

Mr. Byrne, I certainly hope you've taken your Senate colleagues out by the woodshed and given them the same lecture you gave us just a minute ago.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**The Chair:** Mr. Byrne.

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

I fail to see what exactly is gained by deleting as opposed to adding, which is really the objective here. I'll make a concession.

Mike, you've said take the word “beater” out of this. Let's work to compromise. Everything else stays except... I'll keep “approves that the harvesting of harp seals is fully acceptable”. I will take out “of the age cohort known as beaters and older”. I'll take that out. Everything else stays and we add what Mr. Kamp had. Let's go.

**The Chair:** Mr. Kamp.

**Mr. Randy Kamp:** Let me just reiterate, then, that my intention was not to soften, and in fact I don't see how it does in that wording. You'll forgive me for my linguistic background. I was going to add it, but then it occurred to me that we're talking about the same thing twice, humane methods, and sustainability, and so on. So I thought it would be better to only refer to it once.

My suggestion, Mr. Chair, would be that we defeat this amendment and then we go back to an amendment.... It's not up to the mover to change this motion obviously, but it's up to the committee, and we would have Mr. Byrne make that amendment adding.... I don't know if you'd want to add the whole of what I had there or maybe just “and strongly condemns the ban of Canadian seal products by the European Union”, because we've already referred to those other matters. I think that would be acceptable to us if you want to call the question and get this off the table so that we can get to some more productive work.

•(1300)

**The Chair:** Mr. Weston, you were next on the list. Basically, do you have anything to add further on that? I'm about to call the question on this amendment.

**Mr. John Weston:** No.

**The Chair:** All right.

The question is on the amendment, as moved by Mr. Kamp, to add “and strongly condemns the ban of Canadian seal products by the European Union despite overwhelming evidence in support of the sustainability, humaneness, and value to thousands of coastal Canadian families”, adding that in after the words “the harp seal hunt”, and period at the end.

(Amendment negatived)

**The Chair:** On the original motion, Mr. Byrne.

**Hon. Gerry Byrne:** Mr. Chair, I'd like to propose an amendment to the original motion, that the words subsequent to—

**The Chair:** Mr. Byrnes, I'm sorry to interrupt you. The clerk has informed me that you can't amend your own motion. You need to have someone else make the amendment for you.

Mr. Andrews, would you like to do that?

**Mr. Scott Andrews:** Yes. What we'd like to do here is, starting on the fourth line with the words “of”, remove “of the age cohort known as beaters and older”. Delete that, and then put the wording of Mr. Kamp in at the end of the last semicolon.

**The Chair:** The entire wording? Fair enough.

So the amendment by Mr. Andrews is, with the original motion, to delete the words “of the age cohort known as beaters and older”. It's to delete those words.

I'm going to call the question on this amendment.

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

Mr. Calkins.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Given the considerations of cohesiveness that we've had here, I would like to propose another amendment to add something after the words "continue for generations to come". I would insert in there "and the committee strongly condemns the ban of Canadian seal products by the European Union".

**The Chair:** The amendment by Mr. Calkins is to take the amended motion and to amend it once again to add in at the end.... I'm sorry, do you want to repeat that wording, just so I can hear the words?

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** After the words "continue for generations to come", add in before the semicolon, "and the committee strongly condemns the ban of Canadian seal products by the European Union".

**The Chair:** The amendment is to add, at the end of the amended motion, "and the committee strongly condemns the ban of Canadian seal products by the European Union".

(Amendment agreed to [See *Minutes of Proceedings*])

•(1305)

**The Chair:** Just let me catch up to myself here.

On the motion itself, we're going to call a vote. This will be a recorded vote, so I will ask the clerk at this time to conduct the recorded vote.

(Motion as amended agreed to: yeas 10; nays 0)

**The Chair:** The committee unanimously approves the motion. I will direct the clerk, as outlined in the motion, to make the results of the recorded vote immediately available to the public through the media. The advisories will be prepared by her and distributed throughout Canada.

There is one more point of business before we adjourn. Mr. Blais has requested that on Thursday, because of the urgency of this issue, we ask the minister and/or officials from DFO to come in and to brief this committee on the events surrounding the ban of the seal products by the European Union.

Basically, I'm letting the committee know. Is it the wish of the committee to proceed? Thank you.

**Mr. Blaine Calkins:** How does that affect our current work plan, Mr. Chair? Does it delay the lobster report?

**The Chair:** It will delay the lobster report.

Thank you. The meeting is adjourned.

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