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GREG PRETTY
President

JASON SPINGLE
Secretary-Treasurer

March 15, 2024

Elvis Loveless
Minister Department of Fisheries, Forestry, and Agriculture
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Dear Minister Loveless,

Thank you for your letter on March 14th, 2024. Harvesters who have been protesting at government buildings in recent days and weeks represent the vast majority of our inshore membership, comprised over nearly 10,000 inshore, commercial fish harvesters and 4,000 owner-operator enterprises. These members are asking for **free enterprise**.

We can confirm, as was stated in our public media release yesterday afternoon, that FFAW-Unifor is formally requesting you listen to protesting fish harvesters by (1) lifting all processing caps in the province, (2) granting new processing licenses, and (3) removing restrictions on outside buyers. **This request does not pertain solely to snow crab – but for all commercial species fished by inshore licenses.** We also ask that your government undertake a broad, independent review of the province's processing licensing policy and the effect it has on the economic success of owner-operator harvesters.

Every single processing job in this province is important. And we can all agree that our entire province benefits the most when the work stays here.

We believe that changing government policy to allow for outside buyers will **not** negatively impact the work available for plant workers in Newfoundland and Labrador. 2023 and 2022 fishing seasons provided ample evidence that current processing companies in Newfoundland and Labrador **do not have the capacity** to handle existing quotas for snow crab, northern cod, capelin, and other species in a timely manner.

While thousands of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians benefit from seasonal processing work, the bulk of companies brought in Temporary Foreign Workers last season rather than focus on improving work for those who live in the province. Moreover, companies enjoy the benefit of trucking product in and out of the province, while the primary producers do not enjoy the same benefits.

The stock projections for important commercial species are on an upward trend. Species like snow crab, northern cod, capelin, redfish, and lobster are all showing exceptional promise, and we expect landings will only continue to increase. **Buyers must be made available to harvesters to meet this increasing supply.**

Minister Loveless, fish harvesters in our province have been disadvantaged long enough. In recent years, harvesters have been faced with strict weekly limits, unfounded deductions, plants that chose not to process certain species, and others who refused to purchase from certain harvesters. All of which amounts to a very toxic business relationship for both harvesters and plant workers. **More competition and market access for harvesters is desperately needed.**

As representatives elected by the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, there is an expectation that government leaders will act on the formal recommendations provided via official channels; such as those provided by the Processing Licensing Board. In this regard, it is our understanding that the government has failed to approve several recommendations that seek to improve capacity the fishing industry.

To reiterate our request, we are formally asking the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador to:

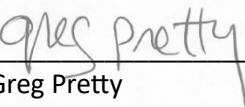
- 1) Lift all processing caps on existing processors in the province
- 2) Grant new processing licenses
- 3) Remove restrictions on outside buyers to allow prospective buyers from Atlantic Canada and Quebec
- 4) Undertake a formal, independent review of the province's processing licensing policy

In addition to these requests, we once again ask that your government improve transparency in the processing sector, to ensure existing license holders are fully utilizing their licenses, and that this information be provided to the province in a timely manner. Moreover, processing companies must disclose information on markets, price, pack-out and yield, to ensure that Collective Bargaining in the fishery is fair for both parties, rather than one-sided in favour of the companies.

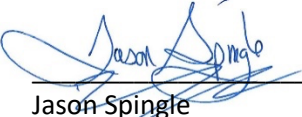
If inshore fish harvesters do not succeed, neither will plant workers, and neither will our coastal communities. The system must change if we have any hope of a future for the owner-operator fishery in our province with harvesters having the ability to land **all** of their allotted quotas in **all** commercial species.

We respectfully await your decision to these requests and ask that you respond by end of business day, Monday, March 18, 2024.

Sincerely,



Greg Pretty
President



Jason Spingle
Secretary-Treasurer