

Honourable Diane Lebouthillier
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and CCG
200 Kent Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

April 24, 2024

Dear Minister Lebouthillier,

The purpose of this letter from the harvesting and processing sectors in NL is to express our joint concern regarding the delayed opening of the SFA 6 shrimp fishery, and to request the immediate opening of the fishery.

In 2023, the landed value of inshore shrimp in NL was over \$18 million. Almost 80 vessels had landings in SFA 6, equating to employment and income for around 400 harvesters. Four processing plants had production last year, employing around 200 plant workers and countless off-loaders, truck drivers, dockside monitors, and graders.

According to the Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for northern and striped shrimp, the fishing season for the inshore trawler fleet begins on April 1. The catch rates for shrimp are highest in the spring and spring shrimp also has a higher meat yield, making spring prices generally higher than summer prices. This means better quality and more value for harvesters and processors.

The Northern shrimp science assessment was held in mid-March and the advisory was in early April. This schedule made it impossible to open the fishery on April 1, and the inshore shrimp industry in NL would like to see the timing of the assessment and advisory adjusted to earlier in the calendar year, to allow for a fishery when catch rates and prices are highest. ***While the timing of meetings and decisions can be addressed for future years, we need to find a solution for this current year.*** The science assessment and advisory are completed, and the harvest decision rule allows for a modest increase in the TAC. Overall, the resource appears to be stable.

Opening the fishery now will not impact the health of the stock, and it will allow this much-needed fishery to begin when catch rates and prices are highest.

At the advisory on April 3, industry was informed that the deadline for the re-building plan was extended beyond April 1, but that the decision on the rebuilding plan would not delay the opening of the fishery. This commitment appears to have fallen by the wayside, given the recent email from Leigh Edgar, Manager of Resource Management Operations, which stated “We would like to remind this group that an extension on the implementation of this rebuilding plan was granted until July 3, 2024 to align with the 2024-25 management decision for this fishery...” At the advisory, the department did not present any rationale for tying a decision on the rebuilding plan to a decision on the final TAC for SFA 6, and in fact said that a decision on the rebuilding plan would not delay the opening of the fishery. This is unacceptable.

Therefore, the NL inshore shrimp industry respectfully requests the immediate opening of SFA 6.



Greg Pretty
President, FFAW-Unifor



Jeff Loder
Executive Director, Association of
Seafood Producers