

Owner operator fisheries needed in BC

Tahlia Read
@Tahlia_Oceans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Foreign ownership of fishing quotas harms fisheries in BC. We need to implement an owner-operator system for fishing quotas in BC to allow more sustainable and equitable fisheries

ISSUE

Foreign ownership of fishing quotas provides barriers to many entering the fishing industry, particularly young and Indigenous individuals. High prices in a competitive market, along with accumulation of quotas by a small number of entities, impact both livelihoods and harms the sustainability of the fishing industry.¹

CURRENT POLICIES

DFO currently has no restrictions on who can hold licences and quotas², the House of Commons has recognized issues with this system and made recommendations³ but the Fisheries Minister has yet to take action. DFO is also currently analyzing a survey focusing on owner-operator systems but has not yet released results.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

(2) "That based on the principle that fish in Canadian waters are a resource for Canadians (i.e. common property), no future sales of fishing quota and/or licences be to non-Canadian beneficial owners based on the consideration of issues of legal authority, and international agreement/trade impacts" ³

(8) "That Fisheries and Oceans Canada, with regard to West Coast commercial fisheries, provide financial incentives to independent ownership of licences and quota vs. corporate, overseas or absentee ownership. This could include: tax incentives; a shared risks and benefits program; and/or the creation of community licence and quota banks." ³

RECOMMENDATIONS

In East Coast Canada, amendments to bill C-68 have been made to support owner-operator systems, and has allowed a wider array of people to enter fisheries and keeps economic benefits within the community.⁴ Implementing this system along the West Coast would address many of the barriers to access in our fishing industry

REFERENCES

1. The Skeena. (2023, February 27). *B.C. Fish Harvesters Launch New Petition Taking Aim At "Foreign Ownership Of Fishing Licenses And Quotas."* <https://www.theskeena.com/2023/02/27/fish-harvesters-petition-end-preference-foreign-investors-bc-local/>
2. *Overview of socio-economic concerns in Pacific Region fisheries and related regulations, policies and practices.* (2021, March 24). <https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/consultation/fm-gp/socio-econ/docs/socio-econ-report-rapport-eng.html>
3. *Committee Report No. 21 - FOPO (42-1) - House of Commons of Canada.* (2019). <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/FOPO/report-21/page-18>
4. Dean-Simmons, B. (2020, Dec 9). *DFO owner/operator policy for fishing enterprises becomes law today.* <https://www.saltwire.com/nova-scotia/business/dfo-owneroperator-policy-for-fishing-enterprises-becomes-law-today-529298/>



CONTACTS

Joyce Murray
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada
joyce.murray@parl.gc.ca
604-664-9920

Josie Osborne
Previous Minister Responsible for the Fisheries of
BC
josie.osborne.MLA@leg.bc.ca
(250) 720-4515

