

SUPPORT A LARGER FIRST NATIONS' SHARE OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

The federal PICFI program ends on March 31, 2012. The First Nations Fisheries Council is inviting your support to advocate for a second phase of the PICFI program to the federal government.

At a Community Dialogue Session in Richmond on June 7-8, 2011, First Nations delegates urged the First Nations Fisheries Council to advocate for an increased share of commercial fisheries for First Nations. In 2007, Fisheries & Oceans Canada introduced the Pacific Integrated Commercial Fisheries Initiative (PICFI), a \$175 million investment in the Pacific fisheries over a five-year period (2007-2012) for economic access, enhanced accountability, capacity building and co-management. PICFI is a sunset program due to end on March 31, 2012. The program currently supports 25 commercial fishing enterprises in the province, encompassing 90 First Nations. The need for accelerated economic access transfers was identified by the First Nations Panel on Fisheries in 2004 and was supported by DFO through Pacific Fisheries Reform policies in 2005 resulting in the PICFI program.

The PICFI program is a first step in transferring access and allocations to First Nations. Additional First Nations economic opportunities are needed, as well as continued support to address food security, fisheries sustainability, and meaningful First Nation involvement in fisheries management and multi-tier advisory processes. At the Dialogue Session, First Nations recommended the continuation of the PICFI program for a second five-year term, with a proposal that requires \$425 million to support the following activities:

- **Economic Access** is the largest component and will focus on additional transfers of communal commercial licenses or allocations to First Nations. The target is an additional 20 percent of licenses and quota, especially for fisheries of high value and profitability. The goal is to will bring the First Nation communal share of commercial fisheries to 33 percent. A portion of the funds will be used to explore alternative management and access strategies to enhance benefits for communities and businesses. The transfers will result in stronger and more diversified business opportunities for First Nations.
- **Capacity Building** will support training, such as safety, navigation, mentorships, and harvesting and processing certifications, to assist the expansion of communal commercial fishing opportunities in First Nation communities. Funds for ongoing business operations, management and development for commercial fishing enterprises will also be provided. This enhances First Nations financial and administrative stability, an important element in fostering enduring relationships with government, stakeholders and investors.
- **Joint Management** will support strategies, recommendations and projects that improve First Nations engagement in the integrated management of fisheries and aquatic resources.
- **Enhanced Accountability** will support current initiatives related to the development of standards for the monitoring and traceability of fish and new initiatives related to

Economic Access Communiqué

compliance and enforcement within all fisheries, including aboriginal, recreational and commercial.

The 2011 Speech from the Throne highlights the federal government's interest in supporting economic development on reserve lands by enabling communities to pursue and seize economic opportunities. The continuation of the PICFI program will assist First Nations in the development of governance and economic structures that support the Canadian economy. In addition to employment opportunities and profits that will be generated in First Nation communities, the continuation of PICFI will reduce the need for fisheries litigation, enable self-sufficiency, and revive the fishing traditions that contribute to strong families and prosperous communities.

The success of the proposal depends on First Nations support. Show your support by taking the following action:

| Scale | Activity |
|--------------|---|
| Community | Send letters of support from your First Nation or Tribal Council to the First Nations Fisheries Council |
| | Seek letters of support from municipalities and regional districts articulating local economic benefits (with e-mail copies to First Nations Fisheries Council - info@fnfisheriescouncil.ca) |
| Provincial | Support resolutions by the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs, First Nations Summit and Native Brotherhood |
| | Seek support from your MLAs |
| National | Seek support from BC Members of Parliament |
| | Support endorsement by the National Assembly of First Nations |

For further information, please contact:

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