

January 23, 2009

The Honourable Gail Shea, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
200 Kent Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0E6

Dear Minister:

In October, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce concluded its 79th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Quebec City. One of the highlights of Chamber's AGM is the Policy Session. It is during the Policy Session that resolutions submitted by local chambers of commerce and boards of trade from across the country are debated and voted on by accredited delegates. Once approved, these resolutions become the policy position of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce for three years. This year our delegates issued a clear and decisive national policy mandate that we intend to pursue vigorously with the federal government over the coming months.

Beyond those issues we have already brought to your attention, our renewed national policy mandate includes a number of additional issues that fall within your portfolio. Accordingly, we would like to discuss these issues with you directly in the near future.

Fisheries Management: Fishing industries contribute significantly to the national economy. Unfortunately, overfishing by foreign vessels has been a major contributor to the collapse of Canada's fish resources. We recommend that the federal government take action to deal with foreign overfishing on the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks and the Flemish Cap by undertaking custodial management in the waters above Canada's continental shelf. This would include Canada assuming responsibility for the conduct of science, the implementation of compliance and other regulatory mechanisms to ensure ongoing effective management, and the rebuilding of fish stocks within this marine ecosystem. Canada should also establish management rules for all stocks, including but not restricted to: biomass targets and limits, total allowable catches, seasonal and area closures, gear restrictions and bycatch limits, to be determined by scientific advice.

Aboriginal Treaty Negotiations – Fisheries Component: The commercial fishing sector understands and accepts that the treaty negotiations between Canada, the provinces/territories and Aboriginal groups will result in increased access to fisheries by aboriginal groups. The challenge is to move forward in an equitable way, assuring a level playing field so that no one group of commercial participants has a competitive advantage over another. Fair compensation must be extended to the existing

commercial sector to offset their lost revenues. To make progress on the fisheries component of land claims, we recommend that the federal government create an independent Crown agency with a significant capital fund to acquire various fisheries licenses to compensate for existing agreements in principle (AIP) or to provide economic benefits to Aboriginal groups until comprehensive agreements are completed. The government should also formally declare that they will fairly compensate established harvesters for the transfer of allocation to aboriginal groups to ensure that the costs of treaty settlements are borne equally by all Canadians. Finally, the government should implement several of the Pearse/McRae Joint Task Force report recommendations.

Aboriginal Issues - Achieving Certainty: The challenge for federal, provincial and territorial governments is to create an environment allowing businesses to operate successfully, competitively and with some certainty while the resolution of Aboriginal rights and title issues is underway. The solution is to institute an effective process of consultation. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada has made a commendable effort to address this, releasing its "Interim Guidelines for Federal Officials to Fulfill the Legal Duty to Consult" in February 2008. We recommend that the federal government provide adequate funding and support to implement its Interim Guidelines for matters within its jurisdiction to make the consultation process efficient for the business community, with particular emphasis on ensuring that the Interim Guidelines are implemented by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

The full text of these resolutions is attached and we look forward to receiving your response to these important proposals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Perrin Beatty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long, sweeping underline.

Perrin Beatty
President and CEO

Attachments

CC: Michelle d'Auray, Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Randy Kamp, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans