

April 1, 2009

Hon. Gerry Byrne, M.P.
Humber-St. Barbe-Baie Verte
c/o House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Byrne:

The St. John's Board of Trade supports the Government of Canada's move to formally object to France's plan to claim significant tracts of seabed around St. Pierre and Miquelon at the United Nations. The Board welcomes the federal government's assertion that it will protect its rights on the continental shelf, and encourages federal representatives to continue to take strong action against French action on this issue.

As a Member of Parliament, we look to confirm your support for this position and real action the Government might take on behalf of Newfoundland and Labrador.

This is a positive step by the federal government and one which the Board hopes it will have great success in pursuing. Clarity on borders and geographical rights are important for development and ensure that unnecessary problems aren't caused between different jurisdictions. There are ways to cooperate and staking claims across boundaries is not the way to do it.

France states that it seeks to strengthen its partnership and dialogue with Canada, particularly as it relates to St. Pierre and Miquelon's development; this obviously has a direct effect on the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Board welcomes genuine efforts to do so, but disagrees that this is the proper process. It is important to note that our members work directly with the people of St. Pierre and Miquelon on matters of economic development and that the Board supports these linkages. However, on this specific issue we are not in agreement with the lobbying of the islands with the central government in France.

The Government of France's actions are troubling, but the Government of Canada's on this matter are to be applauded and supported. The Board stands behind the federal government on this issue and clearly supports the initiatives it takes in the international arena to ensure that this province's rights and territory are not infringed.

It would be remiss if the St. John's Board of Trade did not use this opportunity to further articulate the policy it has advocated at the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, that being custodial management. Our resolution has remained on the Canadian Chamber of Commerce advocacy agenda for some time and requires action. It calls on the federal government to:

Take decisive 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, whereby Canada would assume 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 would 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.

Mr. Byrne, we look forward to your unequivocal and public support of the Government of Canada's stance on this issue of our offshore rights and boundaries. Please be assured that our support is complete and unwavering.

Sincerely,

Bruce Templeton
Chair