



News Release

Minister welcomes independent report on commercial fishing

IQALUIT, Nunavut (April 5, 2002) – A report released today by an independent panel of experts on commercial fishing in Atlantic Canada is good news for the Nunavut fishery, says Sustainable Development Minister Olayuk Akesuk.

“The panel recognized the fact that Nunavut does not enjoy the same level of access to its adjacent fisheries as do the Atlantic Provinces,” Minister Akesuk said.

The panel viewed the Nunavut situation as a special case in the Atlantic fishing industry and recommended that no additional access should be granted to non-Nunavut interests in waters adjacent to Nunavut, until the Territory has achieved access to a major share of its own adjacent fishery resources.

Appointed by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans, the Independent Panel on Access Criteria (IPAC) was chaired by Arthur Krueger Chancellor at Carlton University in Ottawa. The Panel reviewed the current criteria guiding federal decision-making for new or additional access in a commercial fishery where there has been a substantial increase in resource abundance or landed value. It also reviewed the decision-making criteria in new or emerging fisheries in the Atlantic industry and dealt with practical definitions of related terms including adjacency, historical dependence and economic viability.

During its consultation process, the Panel made two trips to Nunavut to meet with Minister Akesuk as well as members of the Nunavut Fisheries Working Group.

“The Department of Fisheries and Oceans should be commended for this initiative that will lead to a more open and transparent access and allocation decision-making process,” Minister Akesuk said.

The Minister, however, reiterated his government’s disappointment with the recent federal decision to provide fishing rights in the waters adjacent to Nunavut to the Inuit of northern Quebec in the Nunavik Marine Region Agreement in Principle (AIP), despite the objections of the Government of Nunavut.

“The rights provided in the AIP are in complete contradiction to the recommendations made by IPAC,” Minister Akesuk said. “How can the federal government agree to a process that would further entrench the inequities that exist in Nunavut’s waters with respect to access to and allocation of our adjacent resources,” the Minister added.

Nunavut currently has allocations of approximately 27 per cent of its adjacent commercial turbot resource and 14 per cent of its adjacent shrimp resource. By contrast, the principle of adjacency provides Atlantic jurisdictions with the major share, typically about 80 per cent, of fish resources in their waters.

The IPAC report is available on www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

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